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STAR OF PARIS**
Catwalk classics
from McCartney's
daughter

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**A LIBIDO IS
CURBED IN THE
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THE INDEPENDENT

Thursday 12 March 1998 45p (R50p) No 3,556

Newspaper of the Year for photographs

New owners pledge expansion for 'Independent'



Deal: Dr Tony O'Reilly

By Rob Brown Media Editor

THE *Independent* and *Independent on Sunday* were bought yesterday by Ireland's Independent Newspapers, which pledged immediately to invest heavily in Britain's youngest broadsheet and to set their sights on a sophisticated, up-market readership.

Rosie Boycott, editor of the two papers, will form an Amer-

ican-style working partnership with Andrew Marr, who has returned as editor-in-chief with special responsibility for the comment pages, after leaving the editor's chair last month.

In America, broadsheet newspapers are traditionally run in this way. Ben Bradlee, the legendary former *Washington Post* journalist who will be joining the board of Independent Newspapers, believes the con-

cept can be transplanted to Britain. "The principle is well established in the US and I believe it makes for very healthy journalism," he said, noting that he was never actually "editor" of the *Washington Post*. His title was "executive editor".

Mr Bradlee will be joined on the board by Chris Patten, the former Hong Kong Governor, Baroness Helena Kennedy QC, Andreas Whitlam-Smith, The

Independent's founder and Tony O'Reilly, head of Independent Newspapers.

Dr O'Reilly is the largest individual shareholder in the Irish group and until recently he was chief executive of the food giant Heinz. His company bought the 46 per cent stake in the Independent titles held by Mirror Group and the holdings of other minority shareholders. The commitment to expan-

sion was warmly welcomed by Ms Boycott. She said: "For the first time in a long time we have a really secure future. I cannot wait for it to begin." Mr Marr echoed her sentiments: "I never believed in my wildest dreams that this was going to happen. I have hoped and prayed for this for a very long time."

Announcing the deal in the City yesterday, Brendan Hopkins, who becomes managing di-

rector of Independent Newspapers UK, said: "This is a historic day... We've been waiting a long time for this."

The Dublin-based international media group first acquired a 25 per cent shareholding in the *Independent* titles in 1994, later upping its stake to 46 per cent. This put it on an equal footing with the Mirror Group, which moved the titles from City Road to its corporate

headquarters at Canary Wharf in London's Docklands. The papers will remain there.

"The *Independent* is not dumbing down," Mr Hopkins pledged. "We'll be going into the market to recruit the cream of UK journalists to write for the only true independent UK title. We'll show how we can get hold of some of the best journalists in town."

Independent dream, page 3

Living with a smoker can kill you

By Glenda Cooper
Social Affairs Correspondent

Pressure on the Government to introduce curbs on smoking in public places increased last night after a major British report confirmed passive smoking causes lung cancer and heart disease.

As the tobacco industry continued to claim there was no risk to passive smokers, the Scientific Committee on Tobacco and Health said the "enormous damage" smoking caused "should no longer be accepted".

Figures from the SCOTH report, the first major report of its kind in Britain for ten years, found that living with a smoker raises the risk of developing lung cancer by a quarter and heart disease by about the same. There was no other "reasonable interpretation" of the data the committee said.

For children, the effects were even worse with the study concluding one in five cot deaths was due to the mother smoking and children whose parents both smoked increased their chance of developing asthma by 50 to 60 per cent.

"There is an importance and urgency with the smoking problem that needs to be recognised by both the Government and the public," said the report. "The enormous damage to

health and life arising from smoking should no longer be accepted; the Government should take effective action to limit this preventable epidemic."

The report, which coincided with No Smoking Day, found that smoking was the single most important avoidable cause of chronic ill-health in the UK, and accounted for a third of all cancer deaths.

Smoking should be banned in public service buildings and on public transport, other than

in designated areas, and wherever possible in the workplace, the committee said. It also called on the Government to ban all advertising and sponsorship, to increase the real price of tobacco products every year and to monitor smoking habits of young people, particularly as smoking amongst young adults went up for the first time in 1996.

The committee also said that the Government should consider putting nicotine replacement therapy (such as patches, gum, inhalers) on prescription for those trying to give up.

The Chief Medical Officer Sir Kenneth Calman said that

the report was an important one and that the Government accepted the recommendations and would be looking at them in the light of the White Paper, due out later this year.

It is understood that legislation to curb smoking in public places or workplaces is unlikely except if there was real necessity to do so as the Government believes that a great deal more can be achieved through the existing voluntary measures.

The report comes a few days after the tobacco group BAT industries claimed that a World Health Organisation report had found no extra lung cancer risk for those who regularly breathed in other people's cigarette smoke. But the WHO announced that its 10-year study did show a link between lung cancer and passive smoking - and accused the tobacco industry of staging a "wholly misleading" publicity stunt.

Yesterday the industry refused to concede any ground. John Carlisle of the Tobacco Manufacturers Association said: "We are urging the government not to be panicked into any form of legislation against smoking in public places because of the results of this report... There is no statistical evidence linking passive smoking to lung cancer."

Further reports, page 5

Discovered at last: the chemical secrets of sexual attraction

By Jeremy Laurence
Health Editor

Odourless chemicals produced by the human body which are said to act as sexual attractants and influence mood do exist, researchers have found.

The first scientific evidence for the existence of human pheromones has come from a study of women whose menstrual cycles were manipulated using secretions from under their arms.

Psychologists Kathleen Stark and Martha McClintock, of the University of Chicago, Illinois, asked nine women to wear cotton-wool pads under their arms or eight hours.

They were treated with alcohol, frozen and then the secretions from them applied to the upper lips of 20 other women who were asked not to wash their faces for at least six hours. The recipient women re-

peated the process daily through two complete menstrual cycles.

The researchers found that when the secretions were taken from the nine donors in the follicular phase of the menstrual cycle, two to four days before ovulation, they shortened the menstrual cycle in the recipient women.

But when the secretions were taken from the donor women in the ovulatory phase, the day of ovulation and the two subsequent days, they lengthened the menstrual cycle in the recipient women.

The finding, reported in *Nature*, helps explain why women living together can develop synchronised menstrual cycles. The two types of pheromone appear to regulate follicular development (the maturation of the follicle that produces the egg) and ovulation but not other stages of the menstrual cycle.

The study shows humans have the potential to communicate pheromally and raises the question whether there are other human pheromones that might influence other aspects of behaviour.

None of the recipient women could detect the pheromones, reporting only a smell of alcohol, used to extract them from the cotton-wool pads. In all, two-thirds responded by lengthening the menstrual cycle by an average 1.7 days or shortening it by an average 1.4 days.

The researchers say that the pheromones may have other effects on women depending on their social conditions and the point in their reproductive life. Research in animals has shown that they influence mating preference, dominance relationships, and recognition of individual members of their social group.

Truants get a day off school - with the Prime Minister's permission



Children who skip school joined panels yesterday to advise the Government on how to tackle the problem. Reports, page 10 Photograph: Rui Xavier

Wealthy in race to beat the Budget

By Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

SOME of Britain's richest people have been rushing since the election last May to take advantage of a tax loophole the Chancellor could close in next week's Budget.

Privately, tax advisers say participation by the wealthy in a scheme known as "private" authorised unit trusts has been growing tremendously. Many investment managers, including some of the biggest, manage these perfectly legal schemes on behalf of private clients.

One tax expert admitted last night: "It is a gross abuse." The schemes are not marketed publicly by the financial planning industry, but created especially for individuals with very large sums to invest in shares or property.

There are no comprehensive figures on the extent of these investment plans, which are legally identical to the unit trusts millions of ordinary savers buy shares in. However, as much as £8bn could have been invested in them in order to allow rich taxpayers to reduce the amount of capital gains tax they have to pay.

The amount of tax revenue lost is likely to be small simply because so few schemes are involved. Only 130,000 people pay any capital gains tax, and only a tiny minority of those will have opened the "private" unit trusts.

But these individuals will have been able to save millions of pounds in tax by using the

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AT CINEMAS NATIONWIDE FROM TOMORROW

O'Reilly fulfils 'Independent' dream

By Rob Brown
Media Editor

THE change of ownership of *The Independent* and *Independent on Sunday* came at the end of tortuous negotiations and represented the fulfilment of a dream for Tony O'Reilly, whose Independent Newspapers group concluded the purchase yesterday.

The new owners immediately gave guarantees that the papers would be "signed up to no political party and free from the taint of commercial pressures".

The new board "including politicians of different views and eminent journalists, will guarantee the freedom of the editors from those pressures."

A statement from the board said the owners "today commit themselves to the preservation and growth of the titles as serious and intelligent broadsheet papers of unimpeachable integrity."

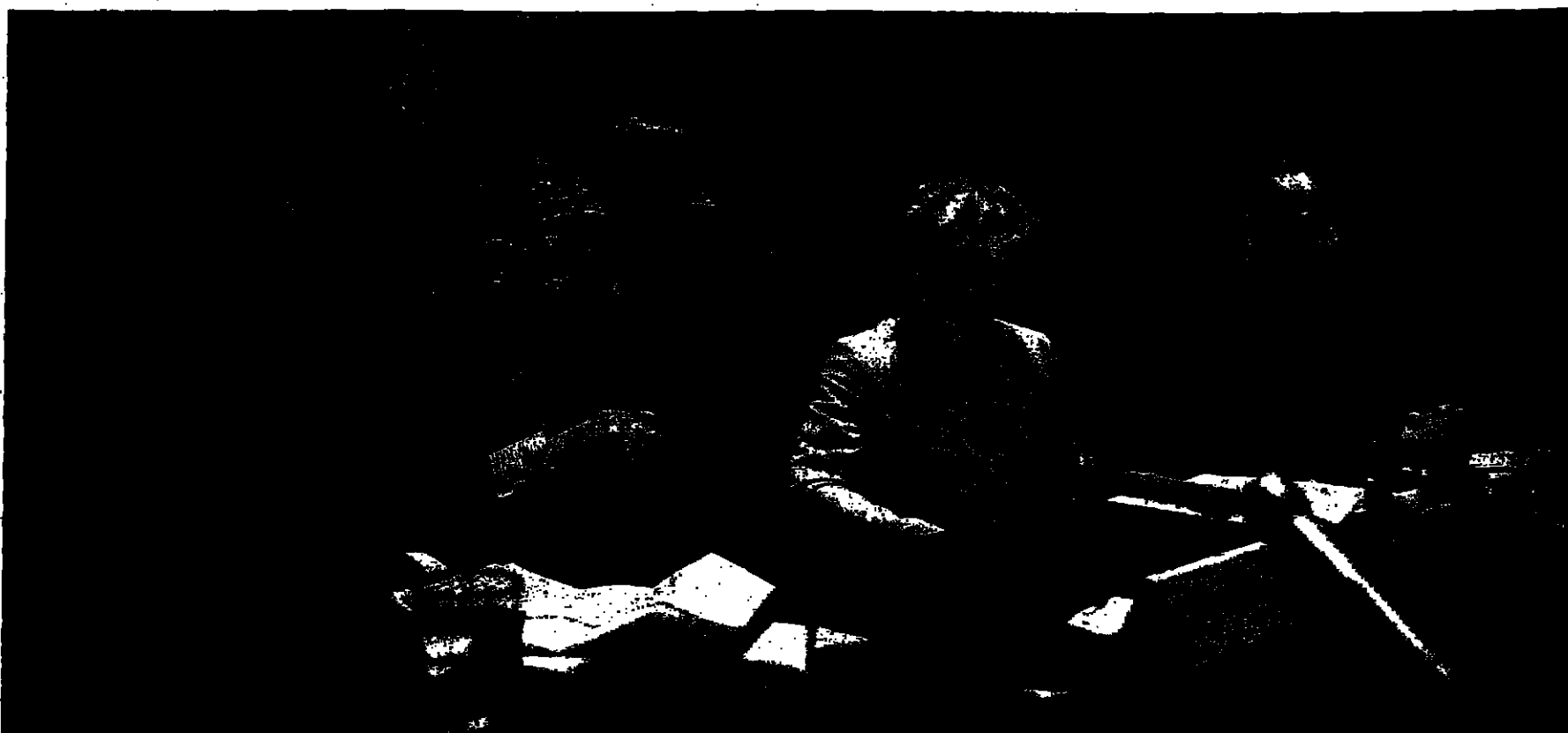
"For its part the board expects the editors to deliver honest, decent, liberal-minded papers, which avoid extremism, report accurately and analyse fairly."

The board believed that "the future of a varied, free and under-estimated press is essential to democracy; and that the best way to preserve that is journalistic excellence, trusted by the public."

Dr Maurice Hayes, a member of the Irish senate and a former Northern Ireland Ombudsman, has joined the board of Independent Newspapers UK, along with the former governor of Hong Kong, Chris Patten.

Dr Hayes said: "Independent Newspapers are extending their ownership of *The Independent* as a matter of commercial common sense, not for trophy hunting, as has been suggested, or to satisfy the whim of the proprietor."

In his view Dr O'Reilly - who is chairman of Independent Newspapers with a 27 per cent stake in the company - believes as much in hands-off proprietorship as the late Brendan Bracken, who became the last Irishman to become a London press baron when he acquired a controlling interest in the *Economist* and the *Financial Times*. On one of the few occasions when the editor of the *FT* felt the need to call him, Lord Bracken simply asked: "Is it about



Done deal: Brendan Hopkins, Ben Bradlee, Rosie Boycott and Andrew Marr announcing the buy-out of the Independent titles in London yesterday. Photograph: Brian Harris

the paper?" "Yes" "You are the Editor," and the phone was put down.

"Dr O'Reilly is very much from the Brendan Bracken mould," said Brendan Hopkins, who yesterday became managing director of Independent Newspapers UK.

Andreas Whitman Smith, who founded *The Independent* in 1986 and will remain on the board of the

company, said yesterday: "We started *The Independent* in order to create a newspaper which was proprietorless. If you are going to have a proprietor, Tony O'Reilly strikes me as really ideal."

Dr O'Reilly was born in Dublin in 1936 and first shot to stardom 29 years ago when he captained the Irish rugby team to a World Cup victory.

He was soon headhunted by the American food giant HJ Heinz, rising swiftly through its ranks to become CEO and chairman, based at its Pittsburgh headquarters. He used his earnings to acquire a controlling stake in Ireland's Independent

Newspapers and a range of other Irish companies down the years.

His Dublin-based newspaper group has expanded steadily. It is now the largest newspaper group in Ireland as well as in South Africa, New Zealand and Portugal. It also owns the largest regional newspaper group in Australia.

Rosie Boycott, editor of the two

Independent titles, said she looked forward to working with a management steeped in broadsheet experience.

"Tony O'Reilly is a great, charismatic and inspirational leader, who is tremendously committed to these titles. He wants to see them restored to their former glory right at the top of the market, holding a firm and independent line."

Patten joins the board

THE NEW management of Independent Newspapers UK, headed by MD Brendan Hopkins, will report to a board of eight chaired by Liam Healy, chief executive of Independent Newspapers in Ireland.

Joining the board is Tony O'Reilly, credited with building the Independent Newspapers empire in Dublin, and Chris Patten (top), former Hong Kong governor and Conservative Party chairman. Also joining is Baroness Helena Kennedy (above), QC and Labour peer, and Dr Maurice Hayes, former Northern Ireland Ombudsman and now Irish Senate member. Andreas Whitman Smith, founder of *The Independent* remains on the board, as does Ben Bradlee, former executive editor of the *Washington Post*.

Flagship of a £1bn global empire

By Jeremy Warner Business and City Editor

THE *INDEPENDENT* and *Independent on Sunday* are to become part of a global newspaper empire with a stock-market value of more than £1bn and leading national titles

in Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, Australia, and Portugal.

Brendan Hopkins, chief executive of Independent Newspapers UK, said he believed a rejuvenated *Independent* would be a flagship for the group world-wide.

The *Independent* would be positioned as an unashamedly upmarket newspaper "appealing to a young professional, high-income, educated readership that is truly looking for an independent viewpoint".

There would be immediate and significant investment in editorial quality - a strategy Independent Newspapers believes will eventually justify a pricing policy that will "justify a premium for all broadsheets."

However, Mr Hopkins stressed the company had no intention of initiating a price premium for the *Independent* titles in the short term. The two titles, which last year made operating losses of £7m, will be integrated into Independent Newspapers' existing and profitable UK interests. Together, the two operations will have revenues of more than £100m and will be immediately profitable, even after the extra investment on editorial product.

The *Independent* titles will be integrated commercially into this existing structure. Joint advertising selling in certain key areas is to start with immediate effect and an exhibitions business is being set up under

the *Independent's* stewardship. Mirror Group, the primary vendor in the transaction, insisted that the transaction would be positive for both for Mirror Group and Independent Newspapers. John Allwood, finance director, said Mirror Group had largely written off its investment in the titles over the last four years and would therefore need to provide only £2m against its profits this year in connection with the disposal. Mirror will retain a printing, distribution and service contract with the *Independent* worth a minimum of £17.5m over five years.

Independent Newspapers, an Irish-based company which was one of the top

performing media shares in the stock markets last year, is spending just short of £30m to buy out the 54 per cent of the *Independent* titles it does not already own together with associated loans and guarantees. The outstanding equity is being acquired for £3.4m. In addition, Independent Newspapers will assume £26m of Mirror Group loans and guarantees.

Independent Newspapers said it believed that the previous joint shareholding arrangements had restricted the ability of either itself or Mirror to apply its own management expertise to the development of the two titles as fully as each would have wished.

Rape charge man tells of love for wife

A WOMAN ran sobbing from a court after her husband - accused of abducting and repeatedly raping her - declared his love for her and waived his right to cross-examine her.

Paul Arvanitakis, who is defending himself, said he had been instructed by Jesus to show his wife "nothing less than the spirit of love" in court.

He had watched her on a video monitor as she gave evidence at the Old Bailey behind screens. She alleged that he had held her in a flat against her will for five days, raping her at least twice a day after she told him she was leaving him for a new life in the United States.

Mr Arvanitakis, 33, from south London, has denied seven charges of rape, and one of false imprisonment, in August last year. He has also denied raping her in July 1996.

As he was told by the Recorder of London, Sir Lawrence Vaisey that he could start his cross examination of her after she finished her evidence, Mr Arvanitakis kissed her face shown on the video screen in the dock.

As he leapt to his feet, he was told by the judge to stand where he was. Mr Arvanitakis then began a five-minute monologue with the quotation: "Love is as strong

as death, but jealousy as cruel as the grave. Many floods cannot quench love, nor waters drown."

As his wife sat sobbing behind the screens, Mr Arvanitakis told the jury: "She is wonderful, beautiful. I love her with all my heart. As far as cross-examination of my wife, who I love and adore with all my heart, I have been instructed by the Lord Jesus that I must show my wife in this court, nothing less than the spirit of love although she fights me with hatred."

His wife interjected: "I do not fight you with hatred - I am scared of you. How can I live with you? How can I trust you?"

Mr Arvanitakis said: "Therefore your honour, I have no questions at all to ask her." His wife then ran sobbing from court.

Earlier, she had broken down in tears as she told the jury how she was abducted and handcuffed in a small flat, after arranging to meet her husband so that he could give her documents she would need to return to America. She said he repeatedly raped her after she decided to leave him.

The prosecution alleges Mr Arvanitakis was a violent and obsessive husband who imprisoned her until police rescued her at the end of a five-day ordeal. The case continues.

Tory bastion lifts its ban on women

By Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

ONE OF the last bastions of all-male clubbishness fell last night when the Carlton Club, home of the Conservative Party, voted to admit women for the first time in its 166-year history.

The club only dropped its all-male rule for Baroness Thatcher, who was made an honorary member in 1975 when she became the Tories' first woman leader. However, some in the club regarded her as an "honorary man".

Lesser women were admitted, but have not been allowed full membership until now. The club, founded in 1832, has about 70 female associate members.

It was still regarded as a club for men, sometimes behaving badly, with a cad's corner beneath the sweeping staircase. But its strength was based on its role as the natural watering hole of the male establishment.

It has seen prime ministers come and go, including Churchill, and it was the scene of some serious Tory plotting, including the backbench revolt which led to the creation of the 1922 Committee.

It was bombed by the IRA



In the club: Churchill

in the late 1980s in the belief that a random attack on the Carlton Club would have a fair chance of claiming at least one cabinet minister.

Other clubs in St James's such as the Reform had a more liberal tradition and even allowed women on to the management committees.

The Carlton Club result, counted by the club's auditors, was for a rule change to admit women - 577 (59.6 per cent); against - 391 (40.4 per cent).

The majority in favour was 186 (19.2 per cent). A total of 968 members voted - 62.5 per cent of the membership and the result will be formally reported to the general committee on 24 March when it will consider what steps should be taken.

One in 10 heart surgeons investigated

By Jeremy Laurence
Health Editor

ALMOST one in ten heart surgeons has been investigated after questions about their competence were raised by colleagues or hospital managers.

Most were subsequently cleared but the Society of Cardiothoracic Surgeons says it is concerned the doubts may be affecting the service to patients. When suspicion hangs over surgeons it can inhibit their readiness to perform high-risk procedures and may deter doctors from taking up the specialty. The 700-member society, which represents all heart surgeons including trainees and the retired, has held an emergency meeting to discuss the issue and will reconsider it at its regular executive meet-

ing later this month. Professor David Wheatley, head of the department of cardiac surgery at Glasgow Royal Infirmary, told Hospital Doctor: "The society is extremely concerned. Cardiac surgery is already a demanding specialty but there is an added pressure from surgeons coming under public scrutiny and if it is perceived that they are being treated harshly or unfairly people may be put off joining the specialty."

He said 18 of the country's 199 consultant cardiothoracic surgeons had been investigated. Heart surgery is a high-risk specialty and a surgeon with a higher than normal death-rate can be spotted quickly.

The development comes as the General Medical Council continues its inquiry into heart surgeons at Bristol Royal Infirmary, where 29 babies died. Surgeons

James Wisheart and Janardan Dhasmana are charged with serious professional misconduct for continuing to operate despite the high death-rate and trust chief executive John Roylance is similarly charged for allowing the operations to go ahead. All three deny the charges.

Last year heart surgeon Duncan Walker lost his appeal against a decision by the United Leeds Hospitals Trust requiring him to take early retirement following a complaint against him. Professor Wheatley said: "People who are working hard and have good results are suffering the consequences of a small number of people who are not." A spokeswoman for the Royal College of Surgeons said the contents of the *Hospital Doctor* article were "substantially correct" but Professor Wheatley did not wish to make any further comment.

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School to teach Jeeves a lesson

By Barrie Clement

ONE IS not entirely sure what Jeeves would have made of it. An arched eyebrow perhaps, or a short bout of discrete throat-clearing. Or perhaps, as the Lady Apsley School for Butlers yesterday showed off its first graduates, Jeeves might have ventured, in a moment of uncharacteristic indiscretion, that butlers are born and not made.

But Lady Apsley and her business partner, Michael Shaw, a former under-butler at Buckingham Palace, believe that while certain qualities are inborn, a whole range of skills can be taught - for £3,000.

The first three graduates of the school yesterday served champagne at Lady Apsley's residence in the Cotswolds near Cirencester Park. David, 48, is a former lorry driver who now works as a chauffeur for an "extremely

wealthy person" in the North-west; Robert, 51, trained waiters at a college in Stratford-upon-Avon; and Julian, 34, was a sales manager in a Cornish car dealers.

They have been taught how to buff up a pair of expensive leather shoes, how to lay a table for dinner and how to behave when they encounter the lady of the house in *flagrant delicto*.

David, who will return to his super rich employer with his new skills, relishes his work. "It's something that most people would only experience if they won the lottery," he said. Julian has a job as a butler in the United States and Robert is waiting for something to turn up.

Former comprehensive pupil Michael Shaw, who runs the school with Lady Apsley, says all kinds of people could become butlers. "We would even take on extroverts, provided they knew when to shut up."



Napkin art: Michael Shaw (centre) teaching Julian Stubbs (left) and David Slater

Photograph: Tom Filston

Close roads - and cars disappear

By Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

CLOSING roads to motorists can see up to a quarter of traffic "evaporate" from the nation's highways, according to the Government's top adviser on transport.

A survey of 60 cities around the world by Phil Goodwin, professor of transport studies at University College London and head of the Government's expert panel, found that the cheapest and easiest way to cut traffic jams is to close a few roads or limit the space available to cars. Remarkably traffic appears to "disappear".

The findings revealed that traffic declined on altered roads by 41 per cent with less than half of the reduction reappearing on neighbouring roads.

"That means on average 25 per cent of the traffic previously using the roads disappeared from the networks died," said Dr Sally Cairns, a researcher at UCL. She said the work showed that "people were much more adaptable in making travel choices than previously assumed".

Civil servants said new research would be commissioned to examine how closing roads would affect people's choices of travel and the effect on the local economy. "We need to look at how this will work on the local level," said Tom Worsley of the Department of the Environment, Transport and Regions. He said the department was inviting local authorities to produce transport plans to cut traffic.

The new research could refuel the debate surrounding road-building. Last month, a re-

port by influential ministerial advisers said that more roads do not mean more jobs. Many environmentalists argue that a huge programme of pedestrianisation would help to reduce traffic and cut urban pollution.

The report showed that more than 33 per cent of traffic disappeared from the roads near Hammersmith Bridge in London after it was closed last year. In Wolverhampton, a controversial package of measures saw congestion cut by 14 per cent.

Cutting down the road space available to cars has been long practised on the Continent. The most successful scheme looked at by the researchers - a five-year programme in Nuremberg, Germany - saw traffic fall by 140 per cent in the streets around the "altered" areas.

According to Professor Goodwin a package of measures can "tip the balance" in favour of cutting congestion. "A modest amount of 'disappearing traffic' can be critical when implementing bus lanes and pedestrian areas and for avoiding unacceptable levels of congestion," he added.

But motoring organisations were sceptical of the results. The Royal Automobile Club pointed out that with Hammersmith Bridge closure, neighbouring councils had complained about "extra traffic levels".

Efforts to ease road congestion are being hindered by ignorance of public transport alternatives, says a MORI survey. Two in five people do not feel informed about local bus timetables and three in 10 feel the same about train times, the survey, conducted for Railtrack and the RAC, found.

BSE team's horror find

By Charles Arthur
Science Editor

AN INDEPENDENT team investigating "mad cow disease" was "horrified" to discover in 1988 that the Ministry of Agriculture was allowing blatantly diseased animals to be used to make human and animal food, they said yesterday.

Professor Sir Richard Southwood, who chaired the four-man working party which was the first to examine the risks posed to human by "mad cow disease" or bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), said that he recalled being told cows showing signs of the illness had their heads cut off with a chain saw once they reached an abattoir.

But it was not this detail which shocked them, he said. "We were mostly horrified that the rest of the animal was going into the food chain," he told the BSE Inquiry in London on the third day of public hearings. Just over two weeks later, new regulations forced the complete destruction of diseased animals. But the four men who had first drew up recommendations aimed at curbing the BSE epidemic in cattle said they were constantly thwarted by a cost-cutting climate in which sci-

ence funding was being cut back, and civil servants were apprehensive about the cost of implementing safety measures.

They also criticised the failure of the government and local authorities to police their preventative measures - such as banning meat and bone meal from being fed to cattle - which could have shortened the span of the epidemic.

Sir Richard said: "It seems that the ban was not really effective until 1993, thereby extending the epidemic by nearly five years."

They also found scientific experts in disarray, with centres of expertise being shut down so that there were only a limited number of independent experts outside government who could provide advice.

Sir Richard recalled that in assessing the risk posed to humans, "We knew that MAFF were anxious and had a marked tendency to be 'optimistic'."

However, the four members of the committee said yesterday that even with hindsight, they would not change their broad recommendations. But other members - significantly, Sir Richard - disagreed. "I wouldn't ban beef on the bone," he said later. "I would inform people about the relative risks."

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Barnstorming Wagner finds a perch in the Cotswolds

By Kim Sengupta

IT IS not perhaps the archetypal venue for some of the great opera classics. Not long ago the stage where the arias will be sung reverberated to the cackling of hens and mooing of cows.

But the former barn will this summer host the Longborough Opera Festival, with the staging of *Das Rheingold*, and *The Barber of Seville* and *The Magic Flute* to follow.

The musical director for the Wagner epic is Alistair Dawes, for years head of music at the Royal Opera House and who has worked with some of the most renowned conductors, including Zubin Mehta, Sir Colin Davis and Bernard Haitink. He has also conducted *Peter Grimes* at the Royal Opera House.

Mr Dawes could be forgiven for feeling a surreal sense of *déjà vu* at the former hen house in Martin Graham's Gloucestershire farm. It has 400 plush red auditorium seats from the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, as well as boxes. Chandeliers hang from the ceiling, and the outside is a mock-Palladian facade, with intricately ornate doors and windows. The facade was designed by the Cirencester-based architect John Whilton and is constructed from concrete blocks and paving slabs. Wooden cut-outs of Rossini, Verdi, Mozart, Puccini and Wagner, made by local artists, are bolted on when the operas are staged.

Mr Graham's friends and supporters describe him as a 1990s Renaissance man. A property developer, he has commercial interests across Europe, headquarters in London, and a deep cultural interest in music



Pecking order: Martin Graham at his theatre with some of the original inhabitants, and seats from the Royal Opera House

Photograph: John Lawrence

as well as the desire to bring it to the Cotswolds. Not everyone shares this view.

Some accuse him of despoiling an area of wonderful natural beauty. The Council for the Protection of Rural England has objected. Vera Burke, a member who lives in the village, complained: "Both the design and

colour are an eyesore and Mr Graham is trying to ride roughshod over planning law." Mr Graham claims no council consent was needed to build the facade because the General Development Order allows a farmer to build a wall around his barn, and his is an agricultural building for most of the year.

Cotswold District Council at first wanted the facade to be replaced by a wall which would be more in keeping with other structures in the area. But officialdom relented and the novel opera house was allowed to continue its existence. As the preparations went on for *Rheingold*, Mr Graham said: "It

involves giants trying to destroy Valhalla, some may say not unlike the council. All we want to do is to share what we have with others. My family has always been interested in the opera and this seems a worthwhile thing to do. Some people spend their money on Ferraris; I choose to do it on opera."

Hanratty test 'inconclusive'

DNA TESTS to establish whether James Hanratty, who was hanged in 1962 for the A6 murder, was wrongly executed are inconclusive and must be taken again, it emerged yesterday.

Michael Hanratty, his brother, last night insisted that the conviction is set to be overturned following assurances from the Criminal Cases Review Commission. DNA samples from Hanratty's brother are being compared with samples from the underwear of the victim's mistress, Valerie Storie; she was raped and shot in the attack in which scientist Michael Gregsten was killed. — Jason Bennetto

MP fined

MICHAEL COLVIN, 65, Tory MP for Romsey Hampshire, was last night fined £1,000 and ordered to pay £14,000 costs by Alton magistrates, when he was convicted of polluting ground water beneath his farm in 1996. Ian Hewish, 54, the farm foreman, had denied causing farm effluent to enter ground water beneath Home Farm, near Andover; he was conditionally discharged for six months and ordered to pay costs of £290.

Wreck inquiry

JOHN PRESCOTT, the Deputy Prime Minister, will today launch a public inquiry into the sinking of the MV *Derbyshire* in which all 44 crew died. Mr Prescott will also present the findings of a £2m investigation into the causes of the sinking, 1,000 miles off Japan, in 1980. — Randeep Ramesh

Labour favours voluntary curbs on cigarettes

By Glenda Cooper
and Andrew Yates

THE Government is likely to favour voluntary measures rather than actual legislation to ban lighting up in public places, Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) said yesterday.

The anti-smoking group's comments came in the wake of yesterday's report by the Scientific Committee on Tobacco and Health which linked passive smoking to lung cancer and urged the Government to consider restricting smoking in public places on the grounds of public health.

In America several states have brought in anti-smoking legislation. On 1 January, California banned smoking in virtually all public buildings, including all watering holes, whether regular bars, nightclubs or casinos.

While smoking has been outlawed from restaurants in California for some time as in many US cities this was a step forward, with its detractors comparing it to prohibition.

The same thing is unlikely to happen in the same way here. It is understood that the Government is unlikely to bring in specific laws but would favour voluntary measures instead.

This would mean that employees could object to working somewhere where smoking was allowed by complaining under Health and Safety at Work legislation, reminding



employers of their duty to their workers. Several cases of bar staff suing their employers have been raised in recent months.

"I think what the Government hopes for is that what will happen is what happened in cinemas where cinema-owners got fed up of cleaning up the places and found that their customers actually wanted smoke-free cinemas," said Clive Bates of ASH.

Smoking-related illnesses are said to account for 50 million lost working days a year and some firms have threatened to dock pay off workers who take cigarette breaks. Essex County Council in Harlow has told employees they must clock off before taking a smoking break outside the non-smoking building after a study suggested that smokers spent an average of 40 minutes a day on cigarette breaks.

And Biggs and Shoe Mines,

a chain of shoe shops in the North-west, believes that the 12 years during which it paid non-smokers a 10p-an-hour bonus led to a healthier and more efficient workforce.

Perhaps the most serious threat the tobacco industry faces at the moment is potential litigation. In America last year British American Tobacco and other US tobacco giants such as Philip Morris and RJR Nabisco thrashed out a landmark deal with the United States Attorney General for a \$370bn tobacco settlement, to be paid over the next 25 years. This came in response to a stream of litigation against the tobacco industry which threatened to turn into a flood.

If this ruling is adopted by the US Congress it will allow BAT to escape from class actions and punitive damage awards but not restrict individual litigants claiming against the tobacco groups.

American tobacco litigation cost BAT £345m last year, including £258m worth of provisions for payments to health authorities in Texas, Mississippi and Florida to cover patient care costs.

Here litigation is becoming more of a reality. Last month judges ruled that lawyers fighting the case for 43 smokers on a "no-win, no-fee" basis should not personally have to foot the estimated £9m legal bill even if they lose.

Tobacco barons refuse to back down in passive smoking battle

THE health lobby was delighted by the report linking passive smoking and lung cancer; the tobacco industry stuck to its guns that there was no link established. Who is right?

The report is the latest in a long line that have warned that breathing someone else's smoke can cause lung cancer writes Glenda Cooper, Social Affairs Correspondent and drew Yates.

During the 1980s a number of comprehensive reviews of the effects of passive smoking were published, culminating in a major review by the US Environmental Protection Agency in 1993 which classified Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS) as a class A carcinogen.

Last November the British Medical Journal carried an analysis of 37 published epi-

demiological studies looking at more than 4000 cases.

It concluded that the risk of lung cancer in life-long non-smokers who lived with a smoker was 24 per cent, and that tobacco-specific carcinogens in the blood of non-smokers provided clear evidence of this.

While the evidence linking passive smoking and lung cancer is far weaker than that of active smoking, the cumulative evidence points that way.

The tobacco industry refuse to accept these findings saying that the relative risks are not significant.

The Tobacco Manufacturers' Association claimed yesterday that of 60 studies they had looked at 80 per cent showed no significantly statistical increase. Martin Broughton, chief executive of BAT, said yester-

day that he was convinced that passive smoking was not a killer.

"There have been four reports into passive smoking so far and none of them has been statistically conclusive," he said. "One even suggested that passive smoking actually reduced the risk of death."

The tobacco companies claim a World Health Organisation paper, leaked at the weekend, proved there was no link between passive smoking and lung cancer.

The WHO say BAT have misinterpreted the data and there was actually an estimated 16 per cent increase of lung cancer among non-smoking spouses of smokers and the British Medical Association accused the tobacco industry of "desperate disinformation".

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Pupils let down by affluent councils

By Judith Judd
Education Editor

THOUSANDS of middle-class pupils are being let down by their local education authorities, according to figures revealed in a far-reaching study published today.

The Audit Commission report shows startling differences in standards in local authorities serving similar areas. Schools in some affluent authorities are coasting by on standards which are no better than those in some of the poorest.

Figures for the 15 most affluent councils show that the worst-performing affluent council, Lincolnshire, does no better in its GCSE results than Camden in London which comes top of the 15 poorest councils.

Poverty is not necessarily a bar to high standards. Schools' academic performance in some poor authorities is twice as good as that in other similar areas.

Camden has 40 per cent of pupils getting five or more good GCSEs. Southwark, another London borough, comes bottom of the 15 poorest authorities with 20 per cent yet the difference in deprivation is much less.

The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals - the figure used to measure deprivation - is 37 per cent in Camden and 49 per cent in Southwark.

The London borough of Hackney, where ministers last year sent in a hit squad to sort out the education authority, does surprisingly well. It comes seventh, though the proportion of pupils taking free school meals figure is 55 per cent. Kensington and Chelsea, where it is 44 per cent, comes second.

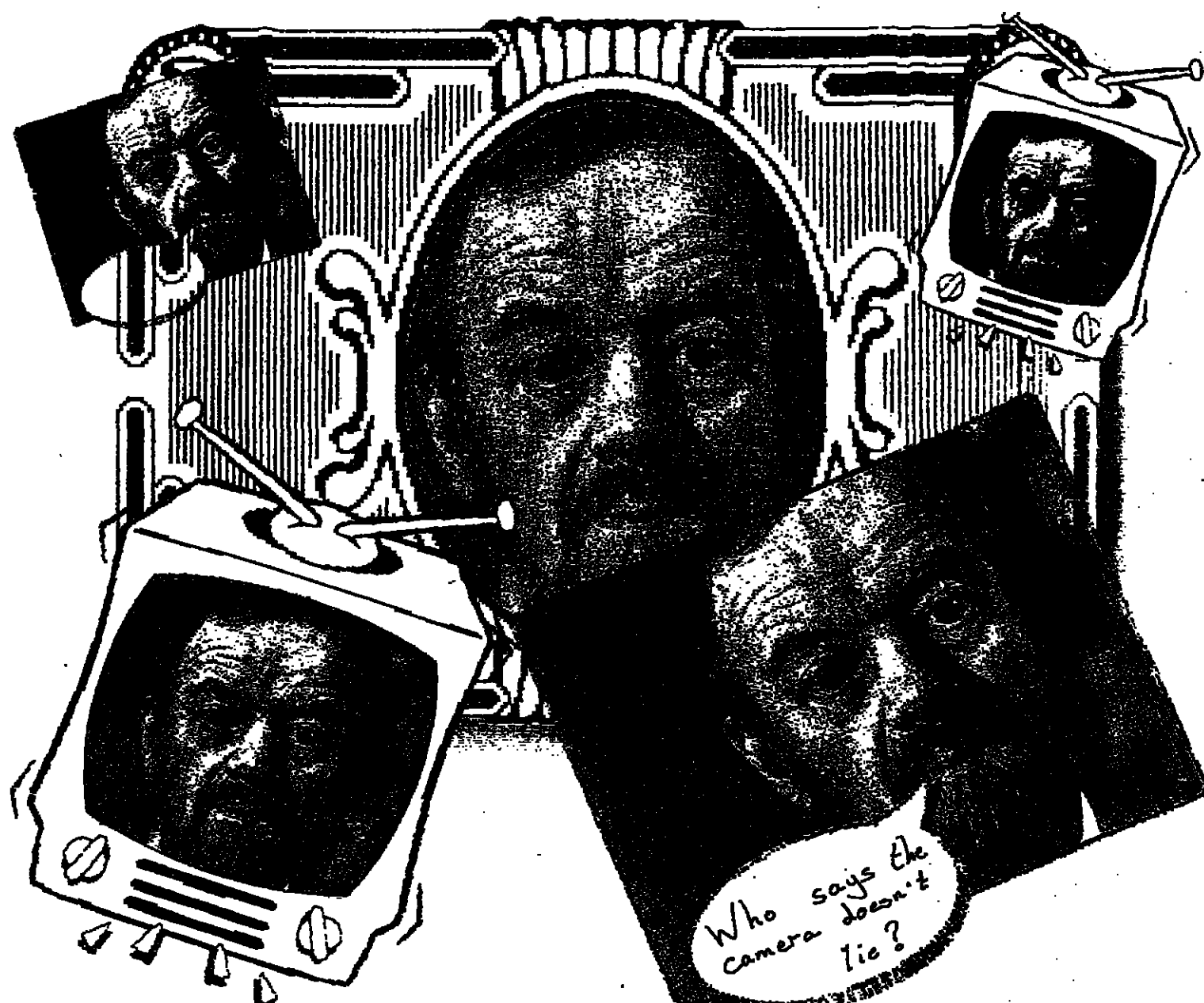
Buckinghamshire, Kingston-upon-Thames, North Yorkshire and Dorset come top of the affluent councils while the East Riding of Yorkshire, Warwickshire and Hereford and Worcester join Lincolnshire at the bottom.

David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education, welcomed the report. "It is remarkable to find that some of the least deprived areas in the country are producing GCSE comparable to those in the most deprived areas. This shows that poverty is no excuse for poor standards and that some better areas are guilty of coasting."

The report shows that councils are issuing statements for pupils with special educational needs more quickly than they were a year ago, but complains that there are still some authorities in which the wait is unacceptably long. In Barnsley, almost no statements were produced within the Government's 18-week time target. Sandwell, Sefton, Stockport and Salford do little better.

Paul Ververs, the commission's director of audit, said: "What can explain the performance of the bottom six or seven authorities? Councillors must draw up an urgent action plan."

Under the last government, the study shows, funding per pupil fell sharply in real terms between 1993 and 1997. Primary school spending fell by 2 per cent and secondary by 4 per cent. But the study emphasises that money does not guarantee good results. Lincolnshire, for instance, spends £2,405 per pupil while Buckinghamshire spends £2,027 and Camden spends £300 less than Southwark.



Boxing clever: Robin Cook photographed by Paul Priestman, the designer of the Instant Fisher Price camera which prints on fun paper

Cook has designs on selling Britain

By Nonie Niesewand

ROBIN COOK unveiled a collection of designer gizmos in his office yesterday which he is going to sell around the world.

Wraparound sunglasses for Nike, an underwater camera, an orange bubbly vinyl cover for a Pet Shop Boys CD, a Swatch telephone shaped like an inner sole and Wallace and Gromit are just a few of the things that will greet visiting dignitaries meeting the Foreign Secretary.

The collection was chosen

by the Design Council to highlight the fact that British designers can put back the fun into functional.

But it is more than a beauty contest. "Foreign ambassadors may be amused and encouraged to use the mobile phones, cameras and sunglasses," Mr Cook believes.

The display will stand for at least a year, and the exhibition will only be changed once because not many statesmen visit twice.

The first step in a Foreign Office initiative to brand

Britain abroad, Robin Cook hopes that it will "get across the message on the quality of British design."

Carefully avoiding any reference to "Cool Britannia", the Foreign Secretary explained that he was following a tradition set by Palmerston, who was "ruthless about promoting British trade."

The Fisher Price camera for children instantly prints out the image taken onto fax paper patterned with the background of a hundred dollar bill, or a TV screen framing it, or a speak bubble. Its microchip is made in Scotland, the rest is made in the Far East, the client is American and you can't buy it in Britain. But Mr Cook isn't fussed.

"Sure, I'd rather that historically we had explored the strength of British design. But there are still 25,000 people across Britain employed in design. The design industry is a big industry. And yes, who wouldn't want to see more made in Britain? But sometimes it is appropriate to manufacture elsewhere."

Two buildings - Alsop and Stormer's 'Le Grande Bleue'

regional HQ for the council in Marseilles and Norman Foster's Reichstag in Berlin - are included in the showcase. The Government is as interested in the design of buildings as in products.

So what would the Foreign Secretary like most? "Should we ever serve canned drinks, I shall crush the cans afterwards" he said, demonstrating the bottle green Attila can crusher - and proving that his 18th century table was too flimsy for this robust activity.

Design, page 17

Brit cool turns to chill for Blair

By Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

TONY BLAIR was "unphased" yesterday after having cold water poured on his government from the rock stars who last year were the toast of Downing Street.

Like the dousing of John Prescott at the Brit awards last month, the stars led by Jarvis Cocker of Pulp told Mr Blair that his way of ruling Britannia was decidedly "uncool".

Cocker said: "It's worse than if the Tories got in, in a way, because with the Tories you would expect the same old shit to happen." Tim Burgess of the Charlatans said there did not seem to be a great deal of difference between the old Tories and new Labour. Ian Broudie of the Lightning Seeds said it was "the same company but there's a different bloke in charge".

Even Alan McGee of Creation Records, who has been brought in to join a government task force, said that a lot of what Mr Blair's government was doing was making things worse. But the Prime Minister's official spokesman yesterday dismissed their criticism as "out of tune" with the British people.

Steven Wells, a writer for NME music newspaper, said the friction between the pop world and the Government had come to a head when a bucket of water was thrown over Mr Prescott at the Brit awards. "New Labour has felt able to use the credibility and the cache of Cool Britannia, which is essentially rock'n'roll, willy-nilly without actually giving us anything back in the way of policies. If you actually look at Labour policies, we've been stabbed in the back again and again."

But Downing Street was whistling through the cold shower of disillusionment. The Prime Minister's official spokesman said of Mr Blair: "He has talked about a post-euphoria, pre-delivery phase and that is the phase we are in."

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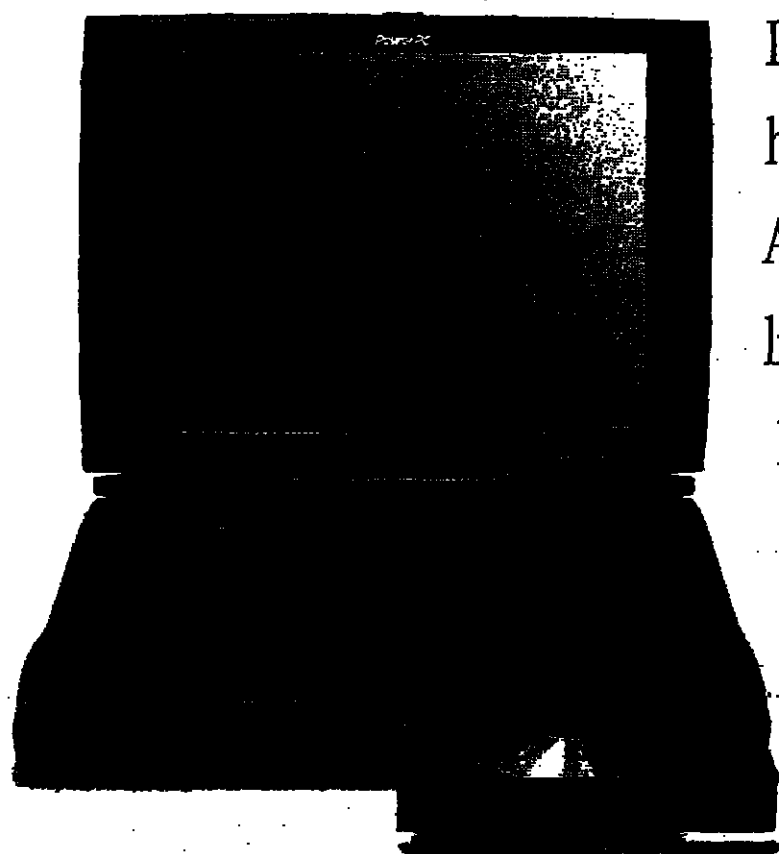
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Performance art: a star-studded cast for the Royal Opera House's hall of fame



True to life: Part of a series of bronzes of great performers which have been cast to raise money for the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden. From left to right: Darcie Russell, Dame Kiri Te Kanawa and Luciano Pavarotti



Minister told tax break will end crisis

By David Lister
Arts New Editor

THE Government will be challenged tonight to help end the crisis in the arts by making all donations to the arts tax deductible - a change advocated in *The Independent's* campaign.

Mark Fisher, minister for the arts, will be one of the speakers at a special debate on arts funding organised by *The Independent* and The Royal Academy.

And he will be told by fellow panellist Peter Jenkinson, director of the New Art Gallery, Walsall, that the changes we want to be announced in next week's Budget would alleviate the crisis affecting many regional galleries.

Pointing to the exhibition *Art Treasures of England, The Regional Collections*, currently on show at the Royal Academy, Mr Jenkinson will say: "We should pause to reflect upon the enormous generosity of former generations who enable us to enjoy what we see on the walls today."

"In the mean-spirited 1990s, when everything has a price, a reminder of such public-spiritedness in such huge proportions is refreshing to witness."

"Public spiritedness toward the arts today will be hugely encouraged by the incentive that all contributions should be tax deductible. People want to support their favourite galleries and other arts institutions. They should be supported in this wish, not discouraged from doing so."

Mr Fisher will speak for the Government in the debate, which will be held at the Royal Academy this evening.

He will be part of a panel that will include Jude Kelly, artistic director of the West Yorkshire Playhouse, Genista McIntosh, executive director of the National Theatre, David Gordon, secretary of the Royal

SAVE THE ARTS

Academy and Peter Jenkinson. The debate will be chaired by the broadcaster and arts writer Melvyn Bragg. Leading figures in the arts in the invited audience will include Phillip Hedley of the Theatre Royal, Stratford East, Jennifer Edwards of the National Campaign for the Arts, Andreas Whittam Smith of the British Board of Film Classification and Jonathan Holloway, of Red Shift Theatre.

The Royal Academy of Arts and The Independent Forum on Government Funding of the Arts will look at the future of arts funding in Britain, following *The Independent* and *Independent on Sunday* campaign urging the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, to make all donations to the arts tax deductible in the forthcoming budget.

A simple system could be brought in to replace the muddled and cumbersome system of tax relief through covenants and the Gift Aid Scheme.

This would massively increase the amount of money individuals give to the arts, and help end the financial crisis cultural institutions are facing.

The system is riddled with anomalies. Some arts organisations are charities, others are not.

Tax relief can only be claimed where the organisation is a charity. In addition tax relief can only be claimed on donations above £250, a deterrent to many who would like to help the arts.

Challenge: New Art Gallery director Peter Jenkinson (left) and arts minister Mark Fisher

DAILY POEM

Florence Nightingale

By Michael Longley

Through your pocket glass you have let disease expand
To remote continents of pain where you go far
With rustling cuff and starched apron, a soft hand:
Beneath the bandage maggots are stitching the scar.

For many of the men who lie there it is late
And you allow them at the edge of consciousness
The halo of your lamp, a brothel's fanlight
Or a night light carried in by navy and nurse.

You know that even with officers and clergy
Moustachioed lips will purse into fundaments
And under sedation all the bad words emerge
To be rinsed in your head like the smell of wounds.

Death's vegetable sweetness at both rind and core -
Name a weed and you find it growing everywhere.

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Ringo drums up funds for cancer care appeal

Ringo Starr helping to launch Marie Curie Cancer Care's £32m Golden Daffodil appeal in Hyde Park, central London, yesterday. The former Beatle's first wife died of leukaemia in 1995 and his present wife's mother died of cancer a year ago. Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

MPs warn of purse-to-wallet pitfall in new tax credit

By Diana Coyle
Economics Editor

MPs WARNED the Government that it must ensure plans to replace Family Credit with a new tax credit in next week's Budget do not switch cash from women to men in low-income households.

In its report on tax and benefit reform, the Commons select committee on social security said the planned working families tax credit, could cost women up to £40 a week, leaving them with an unfair share of the family income and harming the interests of their children.

It rejected Treasury evidence that there was little risk of a "purse to wallet" transfer resulting from the abolition of Family Credit, saying it would scrutinise carefully the practical implementation of the Government's proposals.

The report concluded that families must be given the choice between receiving the new tax credit in the pay packet - which goes to the man in nine out of 10 eligible couples - or having it paid directly to the principal carer, which is the situation now.

The MPs on the influential

committee accepted evidence from experts that income was not shared fairly within households. Research showed that women were more likely to spend income on children.

According to the committee: "Whatever the other merits of paying through the wage packet, any transfer of income from women to men implicit in payment through the wage packet would not be in the best interests of children."

It noted that Martin Taylor, chairman of the Government's taskforce on tax and benefit reform, had recognised this and regarded protecting the interests of children as essential. Gordon Brown will announce the details of the Working Families Tax Credit, a key element in his policies to improve the rewards from work for those on low pay, in Tuesday's Budget.

Yesterday's report emphasised the importance of help with childcare, saying: "We recommend that a very high priority be given to assisting low-income households with the cost of childcare."

This is something the Chancellor has signalled he will address in the Budget, although the likely scale of any new childcare credit is unclear.

While welcoming the broad thrust of the Government's approach to tax and benefit reform, the select committee's report expressed other doubts about the Working Families Tax Credit.

One concern was whether encouraging people to work was the right priority for all families, especially those with very young children.

In addition, it said that the administration of the existing

Family Credit by the Benefits Agency was very efficient. The Government must set targets to ensure the new system is run just as effectively by the Inland Revenue, and that recipients are guaranteed a fixed level of payment for six months at a time to provide stability.

The new system must also address the needs of the self-employed, the MPs said.

They can receive Family Credit, but, as they have no pay packet, it is not clear how they will be paid the Working Families Tax Credit.

The select committee stressed that although the new credit would require the Inland Revenue to assess the tax of claimant couples jointly, there should be no question of ending individual and independent taxation for the majority of couples.

Tory sell-offs denounced as 'Arthur Daley economics'

By Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

THE Conservative government was guilty of "Arthur Daley economics," a minister claimed yesterday as new criticisms emerged of financial practices before the general election.

Jan McCartney, the trade and industry minister, said a damning National Audit Office report on water privatisation was an indictment of 18 years of Conservative rule.

"The Tories were caught practising Arthur Daley economics and flogging off the nation's assets as if they were at a car boot sale. It is no wonder they were kicked out of office," he said.

As Mr McCartney issued his statement, a further NAO report criticised the £1.25m purchase in 1990 of an NHS information system. The system's author was employed to develop it despite owning a firm which went then made £850,000 profit from it over five years.

Sir John Bourn, the head of the NAO, says in the report that the deal had created a potential conflict of interest for Dr James Read.

Dr Read, a GP based in Leicestershire, had spent a great deal of his own time and money developing Read Codes, a computer-based thesaurus of clinical terms and synonyms designed to allow doctors to communicate with one another more easily.

In 1988, the codes were chosen for adoption across the NHS and in December the following year Dr Read agreed to sell them for £600,000 - a figure which then rose to £1.25m two months later.

Dr Read then became the

first director of the new NHS Centre for Coding and Classification, which developed the codes. His firm, Computer Aided Medical Systems Limited, was given exclusive rights to distribute and support them.

Sir John's report is particularly critical of the way the NHS executive handled the issue. It had finally decided to replace Dr Read as director of the centre only in December 1996, after the NAO investigation into the case had begun.

"In particular we believe [the executive] should make it clear that the NHS should not employ people to develop or promote goods or services in which they have a financial interest," the report said.

Last night, the NHS executive said it would respond fully to the criticisms at a hearing of the Commons Public Accounts Committee on 23 March. It remained fully committed to Dr Read's system as a standard vocabulary for the NHS, it added.

The Conservative administration came under further fire yesterday from Tony Blair after an NAO report warned that more than £300m was missing from a pension fund set up following the privatisation of the water industry.

"It is extraordinary that as a result of Conservative privatisations literally hundreds of millions of taxpayers' money was lost - money that was squandered, money that could have been spent on better services," the Prime Minister said.

"The very fact that they behaved so badly when privatising some of our essential public services is the reason why they must never be allowed back in charge of those services again."

Sega tries to lure older game addict

THE SEGA games giant is branching out into sportswear, watches, bags and hi-line skates in a bid to win back the man who has slightly outgrown computer games.

Chrissie Kenton, from First Artists Licensing, who is helping market the goods for Sega, said: "Ideally, the target is for male 16-25 year olds, but we're also looking at the men in their early thirties."

"A lot of men go away from computer games in their late twenties while they marry and have kids, and then in their thirties computer games become a sort of hobby for them."

Sega's main market will be men who still play their sports games and want to look "cool and trendy."

Ms Kenton said: "It's a first, and branding is very much the way forward. It could lead to loads of other items being sold, including chocolate."

One of Sega's main computer games rivals, Sony, says it is already selling T-shirts, tops and sportswear on a smaller scale through its Sony PlayStation magazine.

A spokeswoman said: "It's relatively new, and only available in the UK. But sales are going well, and if it takes off we might consider selling via the internet."

Major retailers C & A, Debenhams and the House of Fraser are all planning to stock Sega clothes, which could be available as early as this summer.

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Why children say bunking off school is cool

BUNKING off is cool. That's why Lily and Lucy started. And once they had started, they found they couldn't stop.

Lily, who is 16, has not attended school regularly since she was 11. "It's the peer pressure thing. We started bunking off a lesson in the toilets for a laugh. Then you do it for a day, a week, a month."

"The first time I bunked off, for three days no one noticed. School is boring. The excitement of bunking is that you might get caught. Sometimes you want to be caught."

She forged sickness notes from her parents and hung about in friends' houses, burger bars and Oxford Street shops. She isn't anti-education, just anti-school. Now she has a home tutor and is studying for GCSEs and planning to go to college.

Lucy, who attends an all-girls school, did not start truanting until she was 12. "People kept saying to me why don't you bunk off. So I did. Then I kept missing things and it's hard to go back because you have to go back. The others look down on you."

Michelle, 15, also feels she

More fun and less pressure are what youngsters want, reports Judith Judd

is trapped in a pattern she cannot break. "Teachers should be more understanding. We are doing Macbeth and I keep missing bits so I get confused. The teacher just says, you don't come to school, why should I bother with you?"

Sometimes she gets as far as the bus-stop in the morning but no further.

For Jack, aged 13, it was not peer pressure but bullying which led to two months' truanting. He told his parents he was going to schools each day then hung about in Camden Town. Unlike another panel member, who was beaten up in his first week by sixth-formers, he was not physically attacked, but his classmates made racist comments.

A social worker found him roaming the streets and he has now been back at school for a month. He doesn't know why, but the racist taunts have stopped.

So what will be they be telling the Prime Minister?

Most wish someone had tried harder to keep them in school. "Schools should be harder places to escape from," says Lily.

"There should be more social workers to help people back," says Jack.

"There should be less pressure," says Serra, aged 14. "It's the pressure of having to get up in the morning. It's the pressure of teachers not letting you go at your own speed and piling on the work. It would be better to do fewer GCSEs."

Hollie, 12, says: "Teachers should make lessons more fun and interesting instead of just telling us to copy things down in a book."

Michael, aged 14, says: "Teachers should be more friendly. They shout at you about missing lessons and that makes you dislike them more."

He is not worried about leaving school without qualifications. He intends to be a black cab driver like several of his relations.



School's out: A group of truanting pupils from London on a panel that will advise the Government's social exclusion unit

Photograph: Rui Xavier

Pupils' panels to advise Blair on solution

By Judith Judd
Education Editor

CHILDREN who regularly skip school joined panels yesterday to advise the Prime Minister on how to tackle truancy. Unison and the National Association of Social Workers have invited 100 children to take part in panels in London,

Scotland and the north-west. Their ideas will be sent to the Government's social exclusion unit.

Unison reckons that 800,000 children - one in ten - play truant. Some are as young as seven.

John Findlay, the union's national officer for social services, said: "It is the first time kids have had a chance to talk

about this as a group. They say school is boring and frustrating. There is peer pressure to skip school. Most of them feel they can't go back to school because they will get told off."

"It doesn't seem to be a very healthy way of dealing with the problem."

"We have to look at wider things, at schools' attitudes, at parents' attitudes

- many parents encourage it - and at social and economic reasons.

"Many of these kids want an education but not this one. A lot of them are really bright kids. 800,000 kids can't be wrong."

"There is something wrong with our social and educational system and we need to take a fresh look at it."

Jail warning in Lawrence murder inquiry



THE five young men arrested for the murder of the black teenager Stephen Lawrence face jail if they refuse to give evidence at a public inquiry into his death, the investigation's chairman warned yesterday.

Three men were formally cleared of the murder in 1993 of 18-year-old Stephen (pictured) in Eltham, south-east London, while the case against two others never came to trial. All five refused to answer questions at last year's inquiry.

Sir William Macpherson of Cluny, who is chairing the public inquiry, said: "My intention is that they will be called before the inquiry. If they refuse they are liable to be prosecuted for failure to give evidence before

the court. In my view [that includes] both failure to attend or failure to give evidence."

The three cleared at the Old Bailey in 1996 - Neil Accort, 20, Gary Dobson, also 22, and Luke Knight, 20 - cannot be tried for the murder again. The two whose cases never came to a full trial - David Norris, 21, and Jamie Accort, 21 - could still face fresh criminal proceedings. All five, however, could face a civil claim for damages from the Lawrence family.

Sir William said the men had been offered a solicitor and had been asked to make statements "as to whether they will give evidence and what they will say". But they had given no indication of whether they would at-

tend the inquiry, which starts next Monday.

Sir William, a former high court judge, said the main aim of the inquiry was not to discover who killed Stephen Lawrence, but to look at flaws in the police investigation. "This is not a trial, it is not an investigation to discover who committed the murder. It is a Police Act inquiry into the policing and all that took place after the murder."

It would not be a failure if at the end of the inquiry he was unable to name Stephen's killers. But he added: "If the evidence emerges that enables me to say on the balance of probabilities, or to be sure, that I know who killed Stephen Lawrence, then I shall say so."

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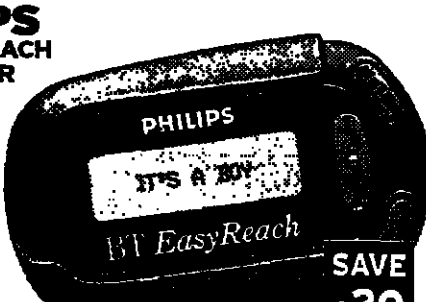


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Immigrants face cameras at airports

By Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

CLOSED-CIRCUIT television cameras are to be installed for the first time at major airports including Heathrow as a security check on immigrants.

The move is likely to be challenged by civil rights groups who are already concerned about the invasion of privacy through CCTV in towns and cities, but the move by the Home Office is supported by one leading migrants' group.

The Home Office yesterday confirmed that it would be authorising the use of CCTV surveillance at the entry gates at Heathrow and other international airports to film all passengers as they leave the aircraft.

Most of the public areas of airports are already covered by CCTV, including the perimeters, to maintain surveillance against terrorists, but it will be the first time that the cameras have been installed on the inside of airports, where tight security is already maintained.

Immigration officers and Customs & Excise officials believe the use of cameras could combat attempts at illegal entry by passengers, or evasion by smugglers who wait in the arrival lounges until airports become crowded before trying to enter using forged documents or with drugs.

The move was welcomed by Tara Mukherjee, president of the Confederation of Indian Organisations, which has been campaigning for some years for the introduction of CCTV at major ports of entry to protect legal migrants from unnecessary checks. Confirmation that the cameras will be installed was given to Mr Mukherjee at a meeting yesterday at the Home Office with Mike O'Brien, the minister for immigration.

It follows a trial of strategically placed CCTV cameras at Heathrow which Mr O'Brien said could "per-

form a valuable security role" in some areas of British airports. Mr O'Brien also said that a fast-track appeal system would be introduced for migrants who are refused visas for entering Britain; it will enable the appeals to be heard before they reach this country.

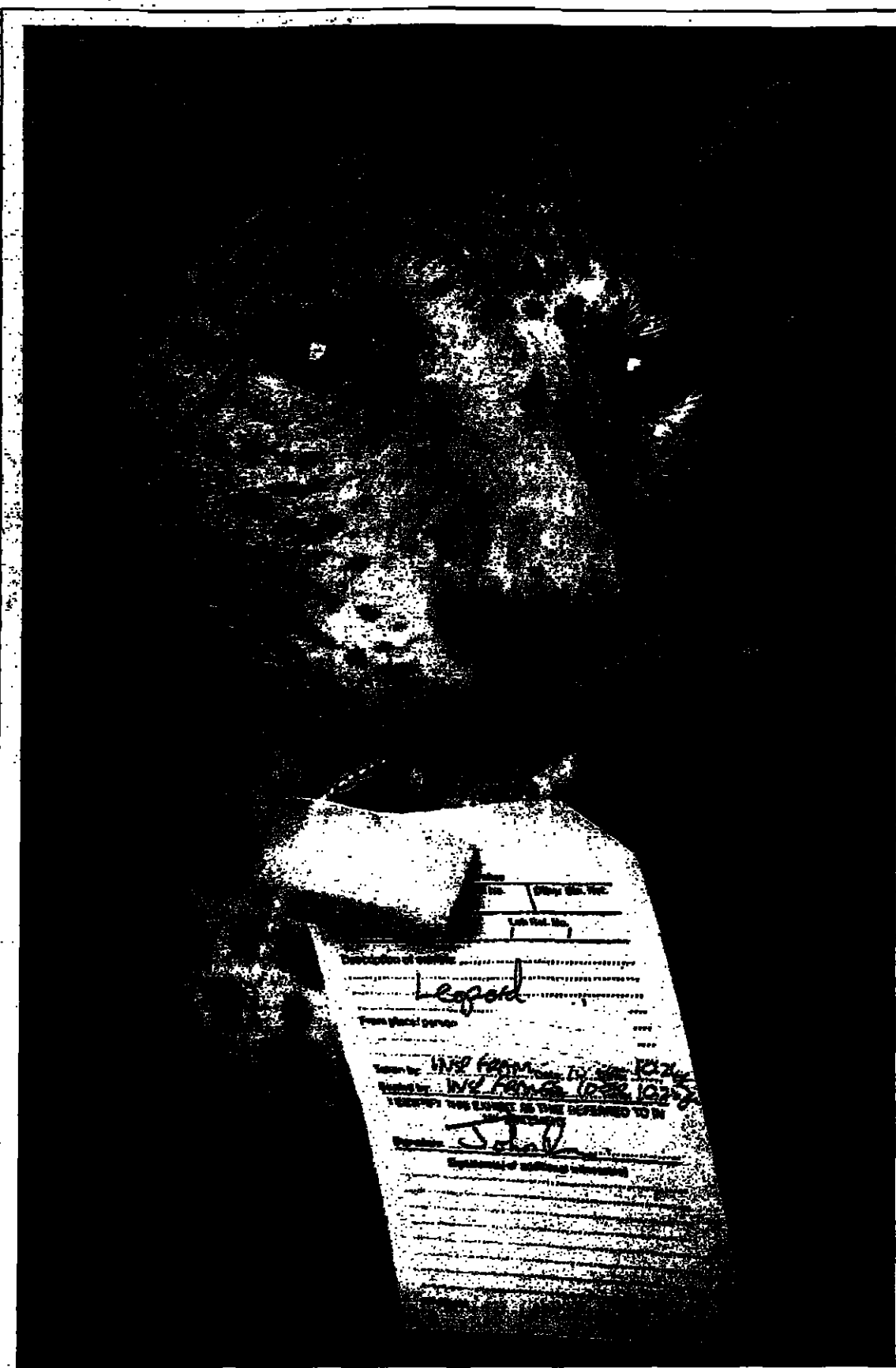
The Home Office also agreed to a feasibility study into the recording of interviews between immigration officers and asylum seekers.

The wider use of CCTV at airports was supported by James Chappison, a Tory spokesman on home affairs. The introduction of cameras at points of entry could open the way to the routine use of CCTV elsewhere through immigration areas, including at interviews with immigration officers at passport checks, as a further check on the rights of migrants.

Mr Mukherjee said: "This is the first government I have known in 30 years dealing with ministers to have a positive approach to the issue of immigration. We welcome the introduction of CCTV because we want justice to be seen to be done. Already there are CCTV cameras in supermarkets, and in the high street. It should not be seen as an invasion of privacy. We hope it will protect migrants from unnecessary checks at ports of entry."

The migrants' leaders believe that the system will help immigration officers identify the flights from which migrants arrive, reducing the pressure for more comprehensive random checks on migrants.

The Confederation of Indian Organisations said in a letter to the Home Office that CCTV at the passport control areas and the tape-recording of interviews should be a routine procedure. "We are not impressed at the possible objections... This is a grey area which is contentious and efforts should be made to ensure that interrogations are not only fair but seen to be fair."



Spot check: A stuffed leopard which was one of a number of endangered species found in a raid on a taxidermy shop in north London by the wildlife unit of the Metropolitan police. Photograph: Geoff Caddick

Train driver cleared of manslaughter in fatal crash

THE DRIVER of a commuter train involved in a crash that killed one passenger was yesterday found not guilty of manslaughter.

A jury at Luton Crown Court took two hours to acquit Peter Afford, of Bushey, Hertfordshire. Relatives and supporters of the 57-year-old former driver cheered and clapped when the unanimous verdict was returned.

The 1704 Euston to Milton Keynes service ended in tragedy last August when it overran a red light and ploughed into an empty train which was crossing its path at Watford, Hertfordshire.

The crash killed Ruth Holland, 54, a journalist from Apsley, Hertfordshire, and injured 70 other passengers.

Both sides in the case admitted that Mr Afford, who had 34 years experience driving trains, fell foul of a signalling system on the approach to a points junction just south of Watford Junction station.

Mr Afford told the court he did not remember seeing two amber signals further up the track which would have warned him of the approaching red light.

When he finally saw the stop signal he immediately slammed on the brakes, but by then it was too late to stop his four-coach train in time.

The prosecution had alleged that the driver deliberately jumped the amber lights because he was under pressure to reach Watford Junction on time.

The defence highlighted deficiencies in the track and signalling system which meant that a minor driver error ended

in disaster. After today's verdict the widower of Ms Holland, Mr Derek Snook, said he was mystified by the jury's decision.

Standing alongside his 15-year-old son Harry, Mr Snook, 70, said: "I realise they took their decision very quickly and felt obviously it was right."

"But I strongly suspect that the verdict would have been entirely different if the railway management had been in the dock with the driver."

He added: "The best thing that can come out of this is to make it a more remote possibility of any subsequent accident on that bit of line."

Mr Snook, who lives in Apsley in Hertfordshire, spoke only briefly about how his family has been affected by the loss of his wife.

He said: "We are obviously devastated at the loss of a beloved wife and mother."

One of the passengers who had travelled on the train, Mrs Sandra Steele, 36, from King's Langley, said she felt sympathy for the driver.

Speaking before the verdict, she said: "I'm not surprised by what I've heard in court about the state of the track and signals."

A solicitor representing 30 other passengers welcomed the verdict.

Nick Mercer said: "In court we heard he was only going one mile per hour too fast to stop the train in time. How many of us travel one mile an hour too fast?"

"The safety net on that piece of track was inadequate and we look forward to the report by the Health & Safety Executive to tell our clients exactly what did happen."

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By Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

A measure of the union response to that compromise was provided in another *New*

On the other controversial issue she is currently dealing with, Mrs Beckett again reflected the Government's search for a working partnership, saying: "The caricature of business hating the minimum wage was never entirely true, and the unions have taken the view for a long time that it's the principle that matters most. Surveys suggest a lot of wage settlements are already being biased towards the lower-paid. It's happening without a noticeable impact on differentials."



By Anthony Bevins

He said there was "a sense of unease that this is a very powerful public figure who is not elected. One can very quickly remedy that as part of the reform. It is, frankly, an anachronistic post".

By Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

Sinn Féin's absence from the negotiating table would, however, blow a hole in the process

minister, but it is widely expected that they will be back at the talks at Stormont, Belfast, on 23 March.

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Serbs make truth first casualty of war

By Andrew Gumbel
in Pristina

IT IS the kind of infuriating line that Serbian officials took during the war in Bosnia. "Can you tell us why you killed all these people?" some journalists asked a lowly Serb official in Pristina as fresh reports of killings by paramilitary police came in.

"Because they were terrorists," was the mechanical reply.

"Why do you call them terrorists?"

"Because they did many bad things."

"What kind of bad things?"

Funeral for victims

ETHNIC Albanian villagers yesterday exhumed the bodies of around 50 neighbours who had been buried under duress in Prekaz on Tuesday night, then reburied them after a full funeral. They had previously held out for forensic experts to examine the shell-battered, bullet-ridden bodies, but backed down under pressure from Serbian paramilitary police.

"Please, come back tomorrow and maybe you will have more information."

Once again, Serbs are being accused of massacres, this time in their own Albanian-dominated province of Kosovo, and again they are displaying their uncanny ability to make the outside world think the worst of them.

While the onslaught on Albanian villages has been carried out with ter-



Candles in the wind: Ethnic Albanians staging a silent protest in Pristina yesterday against the violence enveloping Kosovo. Photograph: Reuters

rifying efficiency, the propaganda effort to convince the world that this is a simple anti-terrorist operation has been almost comical in its ineptitude.

Why has the Red Cross been denied access to the combat areas? Because, we were told by Interior

Ministry spokesman Ljubinko Svet-ic, international aid organisations have been caught smuggling weapons in the past. Why were there so many dead women and children? Because, the terrorists had shot their own families to prevent them running away.

The message being delivered to the Serbs themselves about Kosovo is straightforward - armed terrorists threatening to declare war. But for the foreign media the approach is subtler. For the past week we have been treated to a classic good cop-bad cop

routine, with the Belgrade Interior Ministry portrayed as unfeeling, distant bureaucrats who do not understand our needs and the local information office casting itself as the honest broker that fights our corner and wrests the odd concession.

Cook meets top dissident

Robin Cook, Foreign Secretary, met the Chinese dissident Wei Jingsheng, the first meeting since the EU, under Britain's presidency, decided not to raise Chinese human rights at the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva next week. The Foreign Office said Mr Cook would make concerns "known publicly and privately" to China. A photocall with Mr Cook was cancelled at the last moment yesterday: officials said it was because Mr Wei, who was expelled to the US last year, arrived earlier than expected, and left the Foreign Office before photographers arrived. — Steve Crawshaw

Death pilots 'at fault'

A US military inquiry has concluded that Marine pilots were at fault in the cable-car accident that killed 20 people in Italy last month, and recommends action which could include court-martial. But the report falls short of agreeing the pilots should stand trial in Italy, as the Italians demanded. The jet sliced wires near the ski resort of Cavalese, bringing a cable-car crashing to the ground. To cut the wires, the plane had to be flying lower than 500 feet, well below the minimum regulation altitude. — Mary Dejevsky, Washington

Montand dug up for DNA

By John Lichfield
in Paris



Yves Montand: DNA tests

The body of the actor Yves Montand was exhumed yesterday to settle a paternity dispute seven years after his death. Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris was cleared of visitors and sensation-seekers while his body was removed from the grave he shares with Simone Signoret.

Last November a court ordered DNA tests on his remains as the only method of settling a legal battle over his estate. This was believed to be the first of its kind in France.

Aurore Drossart, 22, daughter of an actress who had a relationship with Montand, has been seeking to prove his paternity since 1989. Montand, best-known in later years for his portrayal of the dastardly farmer in *Jean de Florette* and *Manon des Sources*, refused to take a DNA test before his death in 1991. Three years later a court decided Ms Drossart WAS his daughter, based on anecdotal evidence and resemblance between the two. This was challenged by Montand's two acknowledged children. In November last year another

court said it was impossible to say for sure unless DNA tests were carried out. The affair settled, did not object. Michel Humault, author of the proposed law banning posthumous DNA tests, yesterday said it was important that an individual's body and his wishes be respected after his death. Also, it would be unfair to penalise legacy-seekers whose alleged fathers had been cremated. The extent of Montand's estate has been made public but he owned properties in Paris and the provinces.

Pinochet is senator

Chile's former dictator, General Augusto Pinochet, became a senator for life yesterday. In the Senate he sat, arms crossed and smiling as MPs from the ruling coalition held pictures of dissidents killed under his rule. Several photographs had captions reading "Where are they?", referring to 1,100 people who disappeared after being arrested. Gen Pinochet was sworn in quickly along with another 19 senators elected in last December's election. — AP, Valparaiso

Identical twins run opposing campaigns

FRENCH voters are forever saying that all politicians look the same. And in the canton of Beaufort, in the Jura in eastern France, there is no arguing with them, writes John Lichfield.

The candidate of the centre-right in the local elections this Sunday is Christian Buchot, 42. The candidate of the Socialists and Greens is Claude Buchot, 42. The two are not only brothers but identical twins, so alike that even Claude's wife has difficulty telling them apart.

When it comes to politics, the twins are the best of enemies. Christian, already mayor of a small town of Maynal in the canton, follows the family preference for the Gaullists. Claude, a wine grower, became a socialist and then a green. There are seven other candidates but it is thought possible that the two brothers will top the poll and go into the run-off for a seat on the council for the *département* the following Sunday.

On the key local issue - whether or not an industrial incinerator should be extended - the two brothers take divergent views. Christian says that a bigger incinerator would create more jobs. Claude agrees, but says that the new building should be moved further from the village. He has proposed a "charter for the protection of the local heritage and environment".

Christian's posters show him full face; Claude's, to be different, show him in profile.

On Saturday, the day before the poll, the two brothers will have lunch at their parents' house, as they have had every Saturday for the last 10 years. And which way will their parents vote on Sunday? There is no question that they will vote for the Gaullist candidate, Christian. Claude admits that he is the black - or rather the red and green - sheep of the family.

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America gets tanked up courtesy of El Nino

By David Usborne
in New York

You have to ponder what would happen if cars could run on cappuccino or, for that matter, bottled water. What a catastrophe. Americans, at least, would be begging for a return to smelly old petrol (or gas, as they call it here).

Tanking up has always been gentler on the wallet on this side of Atlantic, largely because American gasoline taxes are so much lower than their equivalent petrol taxes in Britain. Americans guzzle gas because it is cheap.

Never, however, as cheap as it is now. Thanks to a combination of factors, including the

effects of El Niño, petrol in some corners of the United States is now selling at 80c a gallon or less.

That is about 50p. If inflation is taken into account, the average price for a gallon of petrol in the United States is now at the lowest level since records were first kept, about 40 years ago.

American drivers have never had it so good. "The decline since September qualifies as a price crash," says Tilby Lundberg, publisher of the Lundberg Survey of petrol stations nationwide. "It's just wild".

To understand quite how wild, consider this: while this correspondent, if he looks hard enough, can find petrol at less

than a dollar a gallon, he is also paying \$2.79 every morning for a small-size cappuccino at his local mid-town Manhattan coffee bar.

A bottle of mineral water is just under \$2.

On the other hand, you might just compare the pump prices here in America with those in Britain.

You cannot find 80-cent-a-gallon petrol everywhere in the US, however, because the tax levels vary between the states. While garages have been seen posting 75 cents in Georgia, in Connecticut a gallon of regular is still around \$1.30. On average, prices across the country have dropped by around 15 per cent since last autumn.

While competition between garages is important, the underlying cause is a glut of crude oil on the world market, which in turn is the result of numerous events.

Among those have been production levels set by Opec that have simply overtaken demand. The drop in demand, meanwhile, can be traced to

different sources, including economic turmoil in South East Asia.

Then there is the effect of El Niño, which has blessed North America with an unusual winter: tempestuous and wet for many, but also exceptionally warm. Heating-oil demand has dropped further, contributing to the glut in crude.

Clinton makes sure Buddy's sex life is beyond reproach

By Fiona Bell

PRESIDENT Bill Clinton has decided to have his pet dog, Buddy, castrated. The First Puppy's private parts – and whether he would keep his reproductive powers – have been the subject of debate since last December when he moved into the White House. He used to frolic on a leash emblazoned "I'm the one in charge" and his master seemed loathe to meddle in Buddy's procreative future.

But Mr Clinton has been encouraged by animal-welfare experts, including the Doris Day Animal League (launched by the actress), to have the six-month-old chocolate-coloured Labrador castrated and "make a statement" for responsible pet ownership.

A White House spokesman, travelling with Mr Clinton to Cincinnati yesterday, confirmed that he had been urged to neuter Buddy "for the purposes of both the health of the dog and the issue of overpopulation of dogs". He denied that the puppy's behaviour had anything to do with the decision. "The president believes Buddy behaves just fine," Barry Toiv told reporters.

The news that Buddy would lose his reproductive powers was first mentioned by White House doctor Connie Mariano to Doris Day last week in a letter to let her know that the President was taking her advice and scheduling surgery for the puppy. But no date has yet been set. "Is nothing private anymore?" a White House spokesman asked.

Maybe it is just a case of the White House trying to stop leaks – intact dogs tend to mark their territory more than neutered ones, canine experts say. But the late-night talkshow hosts – whose barely printable jokes about the President's sex-life have led the national debate ever since allegations about his affair with Monica Lewinsky first broke – are expected to have a field-day with the news.

One television reporter announced that Buddy would from now on be free of the urges "that led certain two-legged creatures astray in political Washington", while an animal-behaviour consultant said that castration was a useful treatment for hypersexuality, and would help prevent a dog mounting guests' legs.



Family trust: Bill Clinton carrying Buddy as he leads the way down the steps of the presidential aircraft, followed by Hillary and their daughter, Chelsea. The White House says Buddy will be castrated to make a statement for responsible pet ownership. Photograph: Reuters

Lloyd Bridges dies at 85

LLOYD BRIDGES, patriarch of a formidable acting dynasty, whose career spanned films and television from *High Noon* to *Airplane!*, died aged 85 in his Los Angeles home, writes Tim Corrigan in Los Angeles.

The father of Beau and Jeff Bridges, both major acting names in their own right, Bridges' amazingly resilient acting career survived his being blacklisted in the McCarthy era and lasted well into his eighties.

The actor died of natural causes with his wife of 50 years, Dorothy, at his side, along with Beau and daughter Cindy. The couple lived in Westwood, near the University of California campus where they met as drama students. "We all feel really blessed to have been with my dad for these 85 years," Beau said.

Born Lloyd Vernet Bridges near San Francisco in 1913, Bridges fell in love with the films he watched at his father's theatre. He went to university as a law student, but became president of the drama society.

From the Broadway stage, he landed his first film role in 1941 and went on to appear in more than 100 movies. But he became a household name in America with the television series *Sea Hunt*, which began in 1957, playing underwater investigator Mike Nelson. He had never tried scuba diving until he got the part, but he used the series to introduce his sons to the camera.

Obituary, page 21

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Annan faces testing time on visit to Washington

By David Osborne
in New York

WITH the stakes as high as they are ever likely to be both for him personally and for the organisation that he heads, the United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan, began a testing two-day visit to Washington yesterday.

Ushered in for talks with President Clinton and the US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, Mr Annan might have expected to have been met with back-slapping and glory. It has, after all, only been two weeks since he did his deal with Saddam Hussein that brought America back from the brink of war.

His relations with Washington, however, are altogether more complicated and tense. He was not scheduled to brave Capitol Hill at all this time and for a good reason - his friends in Congress are few and embattled.

Mr Annan, who will shortly also visit London, has two principal issues to discuss in Washington - they are the Iraqi deal and American dues to the UN. Unhappily for him, the two have become inextricably linked.

Getting money out of the US has been hard enough anyway. The Saddam deal is likely to make extracting the US dollars more difficult still. Republican members of Congress especially have accused Mr Annan of giving Saddam special treatment and stopped barely short of labelling him an appeaser.

Most diplomats in New York concede that renewed antagonism toward the UN is unlikely to help efforts this year to persuade Congress to release at least some of the roughly \$1.6bn now owed by Wash-

ington to the UN. "There is general apprehension that this is not going to help," remarked one.

Nor will it ease negotiations in New York on reducing America's share of the UN budget from 25 per cent to 22 per cent, which Congress has set as a condition for paying up. There had been hopes that this would have been settled last year. Getting it done this year now seems most unlikely.

Arriving in Washington, the Secretary General insisted that as regards Congress's other main condition - that the UN reform itself - much progress had been made. "We have delivered and I want to know when they will deliver," he said.

Wisely or otherwise, Mr Annan previewed his trip with a sharply worded comment piece in Monday's *New York Times*. "Our doors are kept open only because other countries in essence provide interest-free loans to cover largely American-created shortfalls". Such countries, he went on, include Fiji.

The greatest disaster that could befall Mr Annan, of course, would be the collapse of the Saddam deal. So far, the signs seem good, though sceptics wonder how long it will last. The first visits to presidential sites by weapons inspectors, accompanied by diplomats, should happen within two weeks.

But even the US administration, which has come to terms with the provisions of the Saddam deal, is uncertain about the other steps being taken by the Secretary General to open up communications between himself and the Iraqi leadership. Steps that to some looking like Annan going soft on Iraq.

Mr Annan this week appointed



A young boy venting his anger as his baby brother's funeral cortege passed the United Nations HQ in Baghdad yesterday. Forty funerals were being held for victims of 'lack of medicines' Photograph: AFP

an Indian diplomat, Prakash Shah, to be his special representative in Baghdad. He has also passed onto the Security Council a request from Moscow that a Russian be appointed as co-deputy of Uncom, the commission that runs the inspections. Washington is appalled.

These are suspicions, meanwhile, that should be viewed against a background of rapidly shifting sen-

timents with the UN Security Council. The Washington view, largely shared by London, that Saddam be given no leeway whatsoever until post-Gulf War resolutions are honoured, has in recent months been eroded by the less stringent positions of Russia, China and France.

Sources close to the Secretary General say he is sensitive to the shift and that he does not himself believe

that the sanctions regime can go on ad infinitum.

Even so, you could forgive Mr Annan for feeling unloved by Washington. He got Mr Clinton out of a bind on Iraq at least in the short term. And it was the Americans, after all, who pushed so hard to have him at the head of the UN instead of the predecessor they truly did not trust, Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

India's future may hang on whim of a screen goddess

By Peter Popham
in Varanasi

India's national politics is not dead. If you take the gravely magnificent Sikh who heads the Election Commission, Dr MS Gill, at his word, it has never been in better shape. But regional politics, like a horde of magots, is eating it alive.

Dr Gill and his two fellow commissioners have the job of ensuring India's election runs as smoothly as possible. They stagger polling dates to ensure enough troops in areas of insurgency, reschedule polling in constituencies where rigging has been outrageous, and count the dead. 1998, Dr Gill announced, had been the best Indian election ever. "We are very much satisfied with the manner in which the general elections were conducted," he said on Tuesday, handing formal notification of the results to the President. The turn-out was the highest yet, at 62 per cent; 65 people were killed countrywide, compared to 213 in 1996.

The only thing wrong with the election was the result - or lack of one. Atal Behari Vajpayee, parliamentary leader of the Hindu Nationalist BJP, went to see the President on Tuesday. He congratulated Mr Vajpayee on winning the largest number of seats, though he did not ask him to form the new government, but to produce letters of support from his allies proving he had the wherewithal to do so.

Yesterday at 5pm Mr Vajpayee was supposed to hand over the letters. But there was a hitch. The letter from the BJP's most important, and awkward, ally in the south had yet to arrive. Before the first budget, or confidence vote, even before the formal invitation to govern, Jayalalitha, the ageing icon of south Indian cinema, was putting the boot in.

Commentators have remarked on the number of extraordinary women playing important roles in the election. At least three have emerged with their power greatly enhanced. In the Congress Party, Sonia Gand-

hi now stands on the brink of leadership. And two others will be crucial props to Mr Vajpayee's new government.

With her immaculate appearance, hauteur, precisely enunciated English and crowds of hysterical fans, Jayalalitha is a frightening mixture of Imelda Marcos and Evita Peron. She became one of the biggest stars of Tamil cinema, making 115 films. Then she switched to politics and brought her fans with her.

They retained the fans' mind-set, prostrating themselves at her feet, walking on fire to prove their devotion, coining ever more syrupy titles for her - Walking Goddess, Goddess of the Heart.

She became Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu in 1991, and was responsible, it is alleged, for corruption and self-aggrandisement. Beaten in regional election of 1996, she was charged with corruption offences and went to jail. The cases still hang over her, but after a dramatic success in last week's poll, she is bent on revenge. Her promised external support to the BJP government is conditional on their doing two things: dismissing her deadly rival's government in Tamil Nadu and quashing the charges against her. It will be difficult for them to do either.

In West Bengal, Mamata Banerjee is, by contrast, as homely as an onion, but is another fiery populist. Her link to the BJP is recent and tenuous and her only preoccupation is local. She wants the new government to dismiss the Communist administration in her state, which will be almost impossible.

Since the crumbling of Congress, more Indians vote for regional parties that campaign on purely regional issues. With no national body able to command a majority, these have formidable power, that is eating away at India's ability to produce a government. The answer is constitutional change; but that would require a two-thirds majority in Parliament. Mr Vajpayee will be lucky if he can get a majority of one.

**SOMEONE KIDNAPS YOUR TEENAGE DAUGHTER
WHAT WOULD YOU GIVE TO HAVE HER BACK?**



CAR

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When a breach of the peace is the only way to get things done

THE Spanish siesta is sacrosanct, even in winter, so don't believe those who say it's to do with farmhands resting in the heat of the afternoon. Folk memory records a time a decade or so back when politicians tried unsuccessfully to line up the Spanish day with the rest of Europe, but they gave up.

Never was I so aware of the siesta's iron rule as when I recently took advantage of the peace and quiet to move to a bigger flat. My trusty friend Maurice helped me load boxes into the van of Norberto, the *portero* of my old flat.

Timing was crucial. We had to move between 3pm and 5pm when the crush around the market eased off. A parking place was out of the question so, as it was siesta time, I cajoled and peeled off banknotes to encourage Juan, the *portero* of the new flat, to keep a beady eye on Norberto's illegally parked van.

This part of town, the popular bit of the posh end, is slow to get started, but from 11am the bustle and noise mounts to a frenzy between 2pm and 3pm and then, silence.

MADRID DIARY



Elizabeth Nash

Nothing. Deserted pavements. Closed doors. We swing into action.

But there was traffic of a kind. Under Juan's watchful gaze, frail gentlemen with dark glasses and thin grey moustaches tiptoed forth, young girls with waxed jackets tossed their shiny hair, and stocky females sailed by in billowing mink. "Oh Juan, you're early this afternoon," one noted acidly, with a glare at the boxes cluttering the hallway. "It's your siesta time!"

At 5pm, we'd nearly finished, fortunately, because the area suddenly exploded into life. Children

erupted from school, traffic jammed the streets, horns blared, people bounded from the bakery stuffing their faces with pastries held in little squares of tissue paper. Dusty now and scruffy, I received filthy looks from showered and cologned citizens dressed to the nines.

There's only one thing people ask about my new flat. "Has it got a good terrace?" Actually yes. Spacious, split-level, sun canopy, rose trees, evening shade. Next door's telephone conversations are shrilly audible, the neighbours could be veterans of Franco's army ... but a peach of a terrace.

Madridenos love terraces because they spend so much time out of doors - not in the sun, you understand, but in the shade.

So now Spring is upon us, if only fleetingly, all we want to do is sip a beer at a pavement café.

But, creatures of habit, Madrid café owners don't bring their tables and chairs out for another month. There's probably a rule about it. Like the one that governs the sale of garden furniture. Not till the end

of the month, I was told when seeking a table and chairs for my terrace. It'll be raining again by then.

Among the instructions I received from the outgoing tenant was the insistent warning to be careful with the gas. Always turn the pilot light off, and the tap to the boiler, she said. Gas explosions account for a scary number of accidents in Spain, mainly because of the widespread use of gas canisters, hauled up ancient staircases by a mafia of sturdy Poles.

But if Spaniards are respectful of gas, they are hair-raisingly casual about electrics.

The plug for my fridge is, connected to a wandering cable that hovers over the gas ring. The terrace is lit by bare bulbs and in my future study, where I plan to entrust my computer and other electronic treasures, the plug vomits from the wall, trailing wires and sticky tape. "The electricals look a bit dodgy," I ventured. The response was a blank shrug.

I decided to take immediate action, after the siesta or, er, *manana*.



Taking it easy: The Spanish have resisted all efforts to abolish the siesta

Photograph: Patrick Ward

Arto's
puts
asure
Blair

EU's new recruits move into Brussels

By Steve Crawshaw
in Brussels

AN UNUSUAL new building stands amid the older villas on Avenue de Tervuren, in the heart of Brussels's diplomatic quarter. The elegant detailing, the spacious atrium and the commissioned art on the walls all combine to reinforce the impression of a grand residence. And it is. This is the new embassy of Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Estonia and the former Yugoslav republic of Slovenia - all move into the front row, together with Cyprus.

The granite and glass edifice is Poland's new embassy to the European Union. The first impression is that it is far too grand for a relatively impoverished country.

In reality, that inappropriateness is just the point. This building sends a clear message: the unimaginable is on the near horizon. The impossible (getting rid of Communism) was a mere hiccup, completed without difficulty in 1989. The miracle - creating a robust economy which can hold its own with western Europe - is taking a little longer.

To emphasise the symbolism, the embassy will open on 31 March - the same day that Poland and a clutch of other east European countries are officially admitted to the European ante-room, with a view to joining the EU in just a few years' time.

Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Estonia and the former Yugoslav republic of Slovenia - all move into the front row, together with Cyprus.

Things are changing, fast. On the one hand, a previously cautious Brussels is giving the go-ahead for nifty-gritty negotiations with the five (plus Cyprus). Meanwhile, the east Europeans have begun to face the complications of what EU membership will actually mean. Each prospective member country must comply with 80,000 pages of the *acquis* - Euro-speak for the whole shebang, the agreed school rules. As civil servants and ministers across eastern Europe begin to scrutinise the *acquis*, paragraph by daunting paragraph, the gushing optimism has given way to a sense of worry. The short-term difficulties are now as obvious as the long-term advantages of EU membership. When a group from Poland's main steel-making and coal-mining region visited Brussels, two questions topped the agenda: How many jobs will go? How painful will it be? Answer: lots, very. Other countries have similar concerns.

Environmental standards cause some of the most difficult problems, in a region the Communist rulers allowed to become polluted on an epic scale. Agriculture, too, is difficult: when senior officials visited Poland

recently they found that the milk (though tasty) was light years away from required standards, though encouragingly Polish officials admitted as much.

The process of enlargement is riddled with political ironies. Nine years ago, Hungary made history by chopping a hole in the border fence that formed the Iron Curtain, paving the way for the collapse of the Berlin Wall. Now, Hungary is being asked to join the EU, despite its position on the eastern border - because of the new obligation to keep foreigners out.

Most remarkable of all, the former Soviet republic of Estonia is now about to be part of the west European family once more.

Less than a decade ago its aspirations to independence from the Soviet Union were mocked or condemned in the West. Now, Estonia is set to be an equal partner with Luxembourg and the Netherlands, in just a few years' time. When the Commission gave little Estonia the thumbs-up, says one diplomat, "people in very senior positions couldn't believe it had happened".

After 40 years of living under Communism we have to make up for lost time

Not everybody is enthusiastic. Traditionally, the British have been supportive of enlargement to the east - not least because it seemed a good way of diluting the EU itself. The French are afraid that the east Europeans will spoil the elegant European symmetry. Greece, Spain and Portugal fear enlargement will take away funds which by rights they should receive. The Germans are arguing for both an enlarged and a strengthened Union though in closed-door sessions, they are unenthusiastic about the prospect of east European produce swamping the German market.

A conference in London today includes the winners and losers alike. Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovakia (verdict: "not yet") must grin and bear it, and hope for better luck next time. Then, at the end of this month, comes Winners' Day: the beginning of official negotiations for membership for the lucky ones.

"We know we must eat a tough crust," is one typical east European comment. "But, after 40 years of Communism, we have to make up for lost time."

Skilful
Businessmen can
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Suharto's visit puts pressure on Blair

By Richard Lloyd Parry
in Yogyakarta

AN OPPOSITION leader in Indonesia has called on Tony Blair to put pressure on President Suharto to step down when he visits London next month.

Amien Rais, leader of the Indonesian Muslim organisation, Muhammadiyah, or Followers of Islam, yesterday said that Europe is not doing enough to oppose Suharto, who was sworn in yesterday for his seventh consecutive five-year term.

"I want to see more pressure," he told *The Independent*. "There is no obstacle to the Western governments giving a strong signal to Suharto that enough is enough. I hope that Mr Blair will do so."

In three weeks' time, Mr Blair will host the Indonesian leader and heads of government of other European and Asian countries at the Asia-Europe meeting (Asem) in London. The discussions are certain to be dominated by Asia's economic crisis and by the plight of Indonesia.

Last week, the foreign office minister Derek Fatchett gave Suharto a letter from Mr Blair urging him to carry out economic reforms agreed between Indonesia and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in return for \$43bn (£27bn) of aid. Three days later, President Suharto suggested the programme was unconstitutional. The IMF then suspended the next installment of money until April. Yesterday, the IMF said it was willing to be flexible,

but foreign analysts are increasingly convinced that real reforms will not take place under President Suharto. "Without political reform, the economic reforms will never take place," Mr Rais said. "It is high-time for the Western powers to pinpoint to Suharto what he has to do."

Throughout the Cold War, Western governments tolerated President Suharto's often brutal regime as a bulwark against the spread of Communism. Indonesia was also a valuable purchaser of arms, especially for Britain. The new "ethical foreign policy" promised by the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, was welcomed by dissidents and opposition figures in Indonesia, although enthusiasm was dampened by the Government's decision to go ahead with the sale of British Hawk fighter jets to the Indonesian armed forces, and to invite senior Indonesian generals to an arms exhibition.

Mr Rais was speaking at a rally of students demonstrating against Suharto's unanimous re-election by the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR). Mr Rais, an ally of the opposition leader, Megawati Sukarnoputri, was barred from standing against the President, who has never been opposed during his 32 years in power, despite the worsening economic crisis.

In a speech to the MPR after his swearing-in, President Suharto made only an indirect reference to the crisis which has caused the Indonesian rupiah to lose 70 per cent of its value, adding: "As a nation we must tighten our belts."



Protest: A crowd of about 1,000 students marching around Gajah Mada University in Yogyakarta yesterday, calling on Suharto to step down. Photograph: Rick Rycroft/AP

Indonesia's students ridicule President

By Richard Lloyd Parry

AN INDONESIAN joke tells of a poor neighbourhood in Jakarta where people are queuing for rice. The queue stretches for miles and, after four hours of standing in line, one man loses his temper. "Enough is enough," he announces. "I'm going to kill Suharto." Four hours later, he returns looking miserable. "Did you kill him?" his friends ask. "I couldn't get near him," the man says sadly. "There were too many people ahead of me in the queue."

President Suharto isn't known for his sense of humour, but in Yogyakarta there are plenty of people who find him ridiculous. As the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) was cheering his swearing-in speech in the capital, Jakarta, about 10,000 students marched in the campus of Gajah Mada, one of the country's most famous universities. At nine o'clock the chants were seemingly enough: Reject Suharto, and lower prices. An hour later, marchers were mispronouncing the President's name as the Indonesian equivalent of Asehole-harto. By noon, they were shouting "hang the President", and burning him in effigy.

Such stunts are a risky busi-

ness in Indonesia where insulting the President is a crime punishable by imprisonment. In Bandung, in 1990, six students went to jail for shouting down the interior minister.

But the past few months have seen student protests on a new scale. "Students are an objective political power in this country," says the Muslim opposition leader, Amien Rais. "What happened in the Philippines and in Iran has given us inspiration to mobilise People Power."

But the demonstrations are tightly controlled. For all their vehemence, the Gajah Mada students, like their counterparts in Jakarta, march only within their campus grounds. When yesterday's marchers crossed a public road, it was carefully sealed off by student stewards. "Keep in line," they shouted through their megaphones. "Watch out for provocateurs."

The fear of violence runs deep in Indonesia—the last time there was a crisis like this, in the mid-Sixties, about half a million people died in anti-Communist purges. It would only take a few trouble-makers to start throwing stones. Student leaders at Jakarta's University of Indonesia (UI) estimate that 500 of their number report to the in-

telligence services. There are rumours that the army has been buying UI blazers to bleed in during protests (you can spot the spooks, they say, by their good shoes).

In the Philippines, opposition to President Ferdinand Marcos drew strength from the Catholic Church. Indonesia's Muslims are more divided, though organisations like Amien Rais's Muhammadiyah are attempting to fill the gap. Nurhidat, 24, a student organiser at Gajah Mada, said: "... we are still building the solidarity between religion and students that they had in the Philippines."

Amien Rais, who expects the protests to escalate in two or three months' time, said: "For the time being, we have to play smart, because if we tell the students to go down into the streets that's a very good reason for the police to lock them up. We have to push bit by bit ... because nobody can guarantee that student demonstrations will always be peaceful and non-violent. That's why we need to reach out to the leaders of armed forces."

However large their numbers or keen their wit, the students of Indonesia are unlikely to achieve much without the help of the men with guns.

Commonwealths join forces

INA POSSIBLE harbinger of greater co-operation to come, especially in Africa, the Commonwealth and its French-speaking equivalent, La Francophonie, are joining forces for the first time to send a combined team to monitor the forthcoming elections in the Seychelles, writes Rupert Cornwell.

Of itself, this is merely a response to the request from the Seychelles government for both bodies to observe the vote, from 20-22 March. But it reflects realities pushing the two towards co-operation, rather than competition.

Chief Emeka Anyaoku, the Commonwealth Secretary-General, yesterday called the move a "very significant development", which should

scotch talk that the Commonwealth and La Francophonie were trying to divide Africa into two camps. He denied that there was any institutional rivalry between his 54-nation and the 49-member Francophonie. Even so, there is likely to be some concern over the ambitions of Boutros Boutros Ghali, the former United Nations secretary-general who was elected as the first head of La Francophonie last November after being forced from his UN job by the United States.

But logic dictates further co-operation. Most members of the two bodies are already linked through the ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific) group of countries which negotiate with the European Union.

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To a company chief, it is a listing to die for: Nigel Cope on the new FTSE 100 and a decade of revolution

Change in great measure

TO THE OUTSIDER, the movement of companies yesterday on the London stock market was typical of the snakes and ladders game that is part and parcel of being a company whose shares are traded in the City. Up went Compass, the catering company which provides canteen services to companies and airlines, into the FTSE100 list of Britain's largest companies. Down went Dixons, the electrical retailer. It dropped out yesterday after a stock exchange committee deemed it was no longer big enough to warrant inclusion.

And hovering just on the first rung of the ladder was Mays, a computer software firm providing services to banks and insurance companies. It was founded only nine years ago, and now lies just outside the Top 100, having just missed out on becoming the first information technology to join the blue chip list.

These changes may not seem to have much significance beyond the pin-striped environs of the City banking community at first glance but take a closer look at the shifts in the FTSE 100 - often known as the Footsie - and you see something symptomatic of a wider trend - the shifting patterns in the shape of the British economy.

And a look at the index's changes over the past 10 years reveals a telling pattern. The overwhelming trend is a shift towards fast-growing and often youthful services companies and away from the traditional manufacturing groups which were such powerful stock market performers in the mid-1980s.

As Adam Cole, UK economist at James Capel, the City bank, points out: "The share of manufacturing of the UK's gross domestic product has been declining for several years and the strong pound will continue to squeeze that sector as it is a major exporter. What we have seen instead is a growth in services. We see that continuing too."

But there have been other driving forces. One has been government policy, such as privatisation which catapulted electricity and water companies into the Footsie. Another is the de-mutualisation of many building societies, while a third is management trends which have encouraged many of the big conglomerates, such as Hanson and BTR, to break themselves up into smaller, more focused entities.

A glance at the entries and exits from the FTSE100 over the last 10 years tells the story. New entrants have included Halifax,

Woolwich and Alliance & Leicester; privatised utilities like National Power, Powergen and United Utilities; mobile phone group like Orange; media giants such as British Sky Broadcasting and young pharmaceutical companies such as Nycomed Amersham.

They have replaced some of the grand old names of British industry which have either fallen on tougher times or have deliberately broken themselves up into smaller groups. Those include Hanson, once the "Big Daddy" of the conglomerate sector run by Lord Hanson, but now simply a humble building materials company; Redland, the roofing tile firm recently taken over by French rival Lafarge; Rolls-Royce and TI Group, an engineer.

The pursuit of "focus" has led companies to concentrate on their core business

and contract out an increasing number of services. This has helped providers such as Hays, the distribution and personnel company and Compass.

Dig back into the 1980s and you find evidence of Britain's decline in sectors like computer manufacturing; Ferranti International slipped out of the index in 1986 and later went bust. Amstrad bowed out in 1989 and is now a much smaller consumer electronics group.

According to Bob Semple, at NatWest Securities, the investment bank, the next 10 years may not seem such dramatic changes. Further privatisation is unlikely to feature significantly under Labour and the de-mutualisations of the building society movement seems to have reached a pause. But other trends will continue. The continued erosion of Britain's manu-

facturing base, which has fallen from 23 per cent of UK economic output to 21 per cent in the last 10 years, is likely to signal the departure of more industrial groups from the big league. In their place will come more service providers, or maybe a few Internet service providers, or media groups riding on the back of the digital technology revolution.

The changes will also have an impact on employment. Wages growth has been slower in the service sector than in manufacturing partly due to lower productivity gains but also a higher element of relatively unskilled labour.

As Mr Cole of James Capel says: "Over the next three or four years we should see a continued increase in business, leisure services and financial services but incomes will grow less quickly."



Written in the screens: The index reflects the decline of British manufacturing, and the rise and rise of services

HOW THEY WIN PROMOTION

The FTSE100 was set up in 1984 to take over from the FT30, which dated back to 1935. It was established as a way to measure movements in the stock market and to be representative of British industrial and commercial stocks.

Membership of the FTSE100 and the second-line rankings such as the FTSE250 and 350 are made every three months by a committee of fund managers and stock brokers. The key measurement is stock market value. The main yardstick for promotion or relegation to or from the blue-chip index is the so-called "90-100" rule. If a company's value has risen to be ranked 90th or above (ie it is the 90th biggest firm), the share will be in the Top 100. If a company has dropped below 100th, it is excluded. Being in the Top 100 is very important for companies. It bestows and encourages investment. This often sends the shares higher.

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Why an MP makes the perfect friend (almost)

"SHE JUST adores him," a close associate of Peter Ackroyd was quoted as saying this week of Edwina Currie. The eminent biographer and the slightly less eminent author of potboilers such as *She's Leaving Home*, had, it was said, struck up rather an unlikely friendship. (And a somewhat platonic one, it has to be said. As Mr Currie himself is quick to point out, "He's as gay as a coot.")

At first sight, this appeared to be the most unlikely set of chums since Jonathan Aitken and Diane Abbott. As is well known, the disgraced former minister is godfather to the left-wing Labour MP's son, James, and they have been good friends since they were paired together in the Commons some years ago.

But the friendship between Ackroyd and Currie seems to be of a different order. For a start, it has only barely begun. A fortnight ago Currie was rung up by the National Theatre and asked to chair a talk by Ackroyd on the subject of Sir Thomas More, the subject of his latest biography and one of Currie's heroes. She happily agreed. Afterwards she was invited to a dinner at which Ackroyd was present.

The two got on like a house on fire. "He's uproarious," says



Friends: Ackroyd and Currie



Currie. "Peter can down an enormous quantity of good wine. He's a lovely man and a wonderful human being. Other authors like Martin Amis could learn a lot from him."

Their conversation was broad-ranging, from the suggestion that Ackroyd might stand as Mayor of London to the possibility of Melvyn Bragg

becoming a Lord. (Ackroyd apparently claimed to have heard Melvyn discussing it on the phone with his mother.)

Mrs Currie has long been an admirer of Ackroyd's work. Indeed she goes so far as to describe herself as "a worshipper". Ackroyd, on the other hand, is more of a literary snob.

Perhaps here we have the nature of this relationship. Mrs Currie is a fan. But unlike most fans, she has enough status to consider him her chum.

This is reminiscent of the case of Tony Banks and the American singer-songwriter Aimee Mann. A new but dedicated fan, when he discovered that she was in town, he faxed her record company inviting her for tea at the Commons. And so another somewhat unlikely friendship began.

However, Mr Banks admits that, "If I'd been someone who wasn't a Member of Parliament, my invitation would have been binned." And were Mrs Currie not a former MP, one suspects that she might not have been dining with Peter Ackroyd. Membership clearly has its privileges.

Tim Hulse

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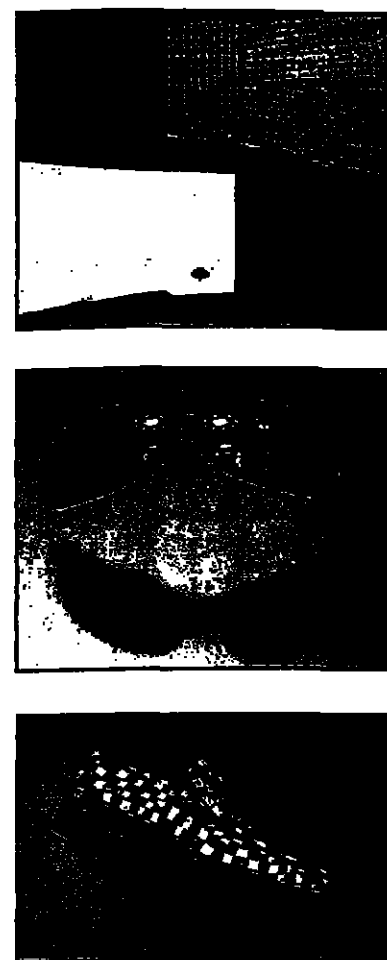
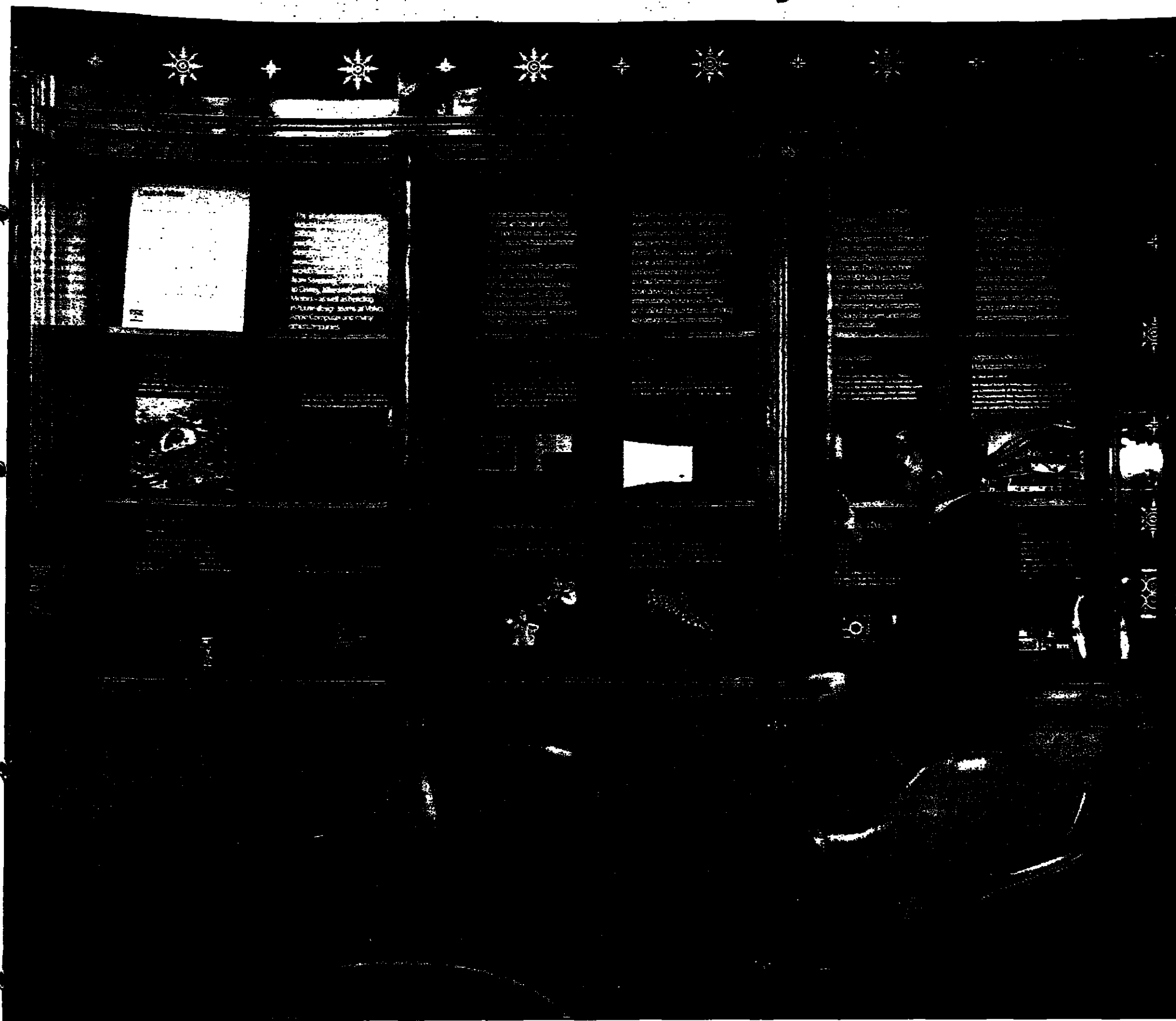
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Robin's latest objects of desire



Cabinet meeting: top row left to right: Minolta underwater camera by Seymour Powell; Nike sunglasses by Ideo; CD packaging for Cream by Dolfin and Pet Shop Boys by Pentagram; Paul Smith cufflinks; clockwork radio by Trevor Baylis. Bottom row: Attila can crusher by Studio Brown; Swatch telephone by PSD Design; Wallace & Gromit by Aardman Animations; Wannabe loafer by Patrick Cox; Fisher Price camera by Priestman Goode. Details above show Paul Smith cufflinks, Nike sunglasses and Patrick Cox loafer

Photographs: David Rose.

Our Foreign Secretary has a message for the rest of the world: British design is brilliant. But, says Nonie Niesewand, somebody else needs to listen - us

WHY would Robin Cook want a pair of Wannabe loafers by designer Patrick Cox in three shades of leather woven together like mosaics, or a copy of the Pet Shop Boys' orange bubble CD cover which sold three and a half million copies five years ago hanging around in his office? To represent the global reach of cutting edge design in Britain, of course. A dozen examples have been chosen by the Design Council in the first phase of a Foreign Office-led promotion, including two big-budget buildings abroad -

the Reichstag in Berlin by Norman Foster and the regional HQ for Marseilles council by Will Alsop.

"I wanted to show the world that the Foreign Office in modern Britain is better than a collection of Hansards," the Foreign Secretary said. So his antique walnut 1860s Dutch bookcase was emptied to make a showcase. Its colourful and playful contents may represent the best of cutting edge contemporary design, but they also retell the familiar tale of how the best of British design ends up being manufactured abroad.

An underwater camera by Seymour Powell, shaped like a banana to maximise brightness in the depths is made for Minolta in Japan. A Fisher Price children's camera digitises the image and prints it on fax paper instantly. The cheapest digital camera of its type at \$39, it is not on sale in Britain, but assembled in the Far East for an American company, though at least the microchip is Scottish. The Clockwork radio by Trevor Baylis is made by his company Bay-Gen in South Africa. Attila, the ugly tool that crushes cans in its Schwarzenegger pincer arms, was designed by Julian Brown

for an Italian company, Resite. So should the Foreign Secretary be showcasing objects not just designed but made in Britain too?

"It really doesn't matter where it's made," argues Tim Brown of Ideo, whose wrap-around Nike sunglasses are designed so that when your head moves while running there is no distortion. Grooves on the rub-

Wallace and Gromit are practically ambassadors for Britain already

berised bridge stop sweat from running into the eyes - just a small detail but one that makes them a winner. The US sprint relay team at the last Olympics wore them.

"So what if it's a USA client, with bits made in Taiwan and Japan," Brown says. It's simply not an issue any more. Design really is a global business and we shouldn't take a national



Foster's Reichstag in Berlin, top, and Alsop's Le Grand Bleu regional council headquarters in Marseilles

view. Promoting Britain's creativity is great. If British manufacturers want a piece of the action they will buy into it."

Designs that won't need much explanation to visiting dignitaries include Wallace and Gromit. Practically ambassadors abroad for Britain themselves, these animations by Nick Park talk to Peruvians and win Oscars. And Brit pop talks a lot more than some trade commissioners. Take the Pet Shop Boys, who have just returned from concerts in Russia where fans paid \$100 a night for nightclub performances in Moscow. "All the smart people are disparaging about Cool Britannia and this hype for design," says singer Neil Tennant. "But I used to get apoplectic with rage when I got on to a plane and they showed foreigners what Britain was like in the Eighties. Those beefeaters in London, and cream teas in the Cotswolds. I prefer this new look."

Robin Cook is concerned that the branding of Britain is seen to be on the cutting edge of design with international players. He personally requested that a computer image of Norman Foster's Reichstag in Berlin (still under construc-

tion) was part of this design statement. The other building on parade is Will Alsop of Alsop and Storrer's "le Grand Bleu" as the cobalt blue regional HQ of the Marseilles council is known. Alsop says its strength derives from an orchestrated experience between calmness and excitement.

For all those on a jingoistic trip about buying British Alsop reminds us that if it wasn't for the rest of the world, and Europe in particular, British architects would have hardly built a thing in the Seventies and Eighties. He argues that if the Government wants to see the best of British design and architecture in this country it has got to do something about the "aesthetic policemen" - the planning committees, Royal Fine Arts, English Heritage, all brought up with an idea of order, restraint, and good manners. Architects have proved that with technology and new materials, they can give the public extraordinary sensuality within their buildings.

The rest of the world has known for a long time that British design talent is worth investing in. The irony, as Alsop points out, is that we still haven't grasped it ourselves.

The winning radio that was almost a lost cause

First time round the Design Council said it couldn't be done. Now it has had to eat its words

THE CINDERELLA not invited to the Foreign Office to take a photocall with Robin Cook and the Design Council chiefs is Trevor Baylis, inventor of the Clockwork radio. Yet the Foreign Secretary was unstinting in his praise for the wind-up radio that replaces batteries

with a big spring in the side. Crank up the handle for 25 seconds and it will run for an hour.

"Can I get the BBC?" the Foreign Secretary asked the young product development designer who had worked with Baylis on the original concept. Yes, and what's more you can get it in some of the world's more remote areas, which is why Baylis, now 60, set up his factory BayGen in Cape Town, to manufacture 80,000 radios a month. He hit on the idea while watching a TV programme on Aids in Africa. Struck by the fact that villages without electricity were cut off from information unless they could afford batteries, he invented a radio that

costs nothing to run. He calls it the new African drum.

But getting his prototype out of his workshop and into production was a bitter struggle. In the urnals at his factory still hangs a framed copy of a letter that the Design Council sent him on 12 March 1992 after it assessing the viability of promoting and backing his project. While the clockwork radio was "a well thought out product which would benefit its target market", it turned him down. It was "very unlikely that UK industry could enter profitably into a licensing agreement with this product. The major customers are third world countries which, with severe debts, would not be in a position

to pay for this device. The extent to which component parts could be manufactured in the UK was also felt to be limited."

Baylis is still angry. "The third world couldn't afford it and no British licensee could make a profit from it? Scandalous." So he got in touch with BBC's Tomorrow's World which gave him a five-minute slot. An accountant, Christopher Staines, saw the programme and said his firm could make it happen. Now they are partners.

"Within two weeks the project had £1m, and funding from the beautiful, darling Lynda Chalker (former Foreign Minister) through the Overseas Development Agency. Bless her."

Nearly rubbed out by those rejections he admits that when he saw the first radios coming off the production line at Bay-Gen in Cape Town he broke down and cried "like a big girl's blouse". Now the designer who prototyped his radio in a garden shed is pushing for an Academy of Inventors. The Institute of Mechanical Engineers would like to install him in the old Patent Office in London and he hopes that if Prince Charles is listening it will be given the status of Royal Academy. Mr Baylis will invite the big cheeses from the Design Council to the launch party.



Nonie Niesewand Cook's Winding up Ed Clark

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The bar where you pay through the nose



Customers at New York's Oxygen Station breathe in the pure O₂. Photograph: Greg Williams/Reis Features

Remember when bottled water was far-fetched? Helen Wilkinson in New York experiences a natural high, coming soon to Britain

ONCE people went to the seaside for fresh air and fun. Now it's pure oxygen that is increasing numbers of New Yorkers are demanding, courtesy of an oxygen bar. And the first stop in Britain for this Big Apple fad is Blackpool.

The medical benefits of high-grade oxygen have been known for some time – the US Food and Drug Administration approves of oxygen therapy for the treatment of 13 specific problems including migraine and headaches – but now the concept is being taken a stage further. Oxygen is being marketed as an essential adjunct to the modern urban lifestyle, hailed for its ability to strengthen the body's immune system, eliminate fatigue, improve concentration, and boost energy.

The trend kicked off in America when New York's first

oxygen bar, The Oxygen Station, opened seven months ago. Yesterday the Blackpool business Finns said it would seek clearance from environmental health officials to offer oxygen as a "pollution-beating, stress-relieving, pure and natural high".

In search of this natural high I took myself off to The Oxygen Station. For 20 minutes I sat in a reclining chair, sipped herbal tea, and listened to New Age music while oxygen was pumped from a canister through tubes inserted in my nostrils. All for a mere \$20!

The Oxygen Station has positioned itself at the cutting edge of New Age activities, promising a plethora of benefits. Its unobtrusive location (it's tucked away in the Healing Centre on 57th Street, near Central Park), and its minimalist decor provides a perfect en-

vironment to recharge the batteries, rejuvenate and escape the worst excesses of urban life. You can even have oxygen facials while you breathe in the O₂.

Regular partakers at the centre include authors who are suffering writer's block, businessmen who need a pep up before big meetings, athletes intent on improving their performance – as you would expect – the "beautiful people", actors and models who believe oxygen will slow down the ageing process, improve complexion, and increase hair and nail growth (not to mention their libidos). The Station is also more than happy to take oxygen to clients. Private oxygen parties and corporate brain-storm weekends are not unheard of – and are a big growth market.

As the only place offering

this service in the city, there is an understandable reluctance on the part of The Station's managers to name drop. But Kirsty Allen and Woody Harrison have both extolled the virtues of oxygen therapy, and the celebrity gym Radu Physical Culture, where Cindy Crawford works out, provides bottled oxygen on demand along with vegetable and fruit juices.

New York's cool merchants – the people whose job it is to spot hip trends – have been quick to identify the appeal of oxygen to young urban professionals who work and play hard. They predict that oxygen bars will rapidly spring up throughout America.

The Oxygen Station is keen to position itself as a cool hang-out if you want to get high, but don't want the harmful effects of alcohol or drugs. In the city

that never sleeps, this could be a major selling point.

Science fiction has long depicted societies where environmental devastation means that the simple necessities of life – like air and water – come at a price. The first sign that this vision might become reality came in the Eighties when air quality deteriorated to dangerously low levels in some Japanese cities. Booths – nicknamed oxygen stations – appeared on street corners, letting commuters top up their oxygen quotas en route to work.

But whether New York's Oxygen Station will prove to be "the bar of the future" remains to be seen. It will almost certainly need a redesign to make it a more enticing prospect for the more ambivalent consumer. Price may also be an issue. With oxygen costing \$1 a

minute, alcohol is likely to remain the drug of preference for the vast majority. (The Blackpool bar is pricing itself much more competitively at a mere £2 for 20 minutes.)

But these are minor considerations. Although I can't quite see hordes of Manhattanites (or Blackpool promenaders, come to that) walking into their local bar, ordering a bottle of O₂, and sitting around with tubes up their nostrils, if oxygen bars are marketed as the ultimate in urban chic and sophistication, they just might catch on. After all, buying oxygen seems less far-fetched if you consider how quickly buying bottled water became the norm among the affluent in the Eighties.

When *Village Voice* starts to advertise 12-step programmes for oxy addicts, we'll know this trend has well and truly arrived.

Not waving, but drowning

Kate Watson-Smyth on one woman's determination to die

TEN weeks ago Jacqueline Leonard walked down to a beach in South Wales and stood looking out to sea. She chose a quiet spot away from the fishermen and took off the skirt she was wearing over her leggings – she did not want to get dragged under too soon. Then she walked out into the water, until it was up to her waist, and swam out into the Bristol Channel.

The next thing she knew she was waking up in hospital after being pulled to safety by a helicopter crew. Her attempted suicide had failed. Two days ago her body was found washed up on the same beach where she first walked into the sea. This time there was no one to save her.

Miss Leonard, a 46-year-old divorcee with no family, had been suffering from depression since her marriage broke up in 1980. After her rescue she said she would not try to commit suicide again. It was a promise she would be unable to keep.

"Christmas was a terrible time because I do not have any family to speak of," she said. "I didn't get any cards and felt as if there was no one in the world who cared whether I lived or died."

The day before New Year's Eve, Miss Leonard made up her mind. Slipping out of Sully Hospital, where she was being treated for her depression, she went down to the beach. "I just planned to float about and wait for the outgoing tide to take me to the ocean."

"I rolled onto my back and started doing backstroke. The sun felt warm on my face and I began to feel very calm and at peace."

But the crew of a police helicopter on a training flight were called to the scene after a passer-by saw Miss Leonard floating face down in the water.

The pilot, Angus Paterson, skimmed the craft along the waves as PC Phil Bracegirdle climbed along the landing skids and grabbed hold of Miss Leonard. As they reached, the shallow

water he gently lowered her and jumped in to give her the kiss of life.

The next day pictures of the rescue were all over the papers. Miss Leonard said: "I realise now it was a stupid thing to do. I am sorry for what I did and have no intention of doing it again." She spoke of moving to Snowdonia and opening an animal sanctuary: "I just want to get out of hospital and stand on my own two feet."

But it was not to be. At some point during the past few days she returned to the beach and waded out to sea.

It was a stupid thing to do, she said. But she could not stay away

for the last time. Her body was found by the same crew who rescued her.

The sense of a woman driven to take her life to such an extent that she ritualistically returned to the place of her first attempt is apparent. According to Dr Mike Nowers, a consultant psychiatrist at Cosham Hospital, Bristol, there is no research into why people return to the same spot.

"There is certainly anecdotal evidence to suggest that they will do so," he said. "I have heard of a case where a woman was rescued from a lake and was then found dead there 18 months later. But every case has its own circumstances and is unique to that person."

And as with every suicide, the distress of those left behind is all too apparent. Jacqueline Leonard may have had no family, but Graham Plumridge, one of the crew who saved her, said: "It has left us all feeling very sad. It was always a possibility she would try again. Her previous attempt was genuine – she was not attention-seeking."

My 12-year-old daughter wants to be a model

Marcia's a single parent and her 12 and a half-year-old daughter was recently spotted at school by a reputable model agency, which has asked her to join. Her daughter's mad keen, but Marcia feels uneasy. What should she do?

DILEMMAS



VIRGINIA IRONSIDE

RIGHT-WING family groups have suggested that girls in the same situation as Marcia's daughter ought to be taken into care, rather than be allowed to pursue modelling careers. But that's because they know nothing about modelling. It's not about sex, drugs and rock'n'roll. It's about sheer hard work, and you're kept slim by early-morning shoots and rushing around rather than by developing eating disorders. A model's figure is not seen as a sexual one; it is more like a beautiful racehorse, a work of art. Paedophiles may get a buzz

out of looking at the photographs of very young models but, without knowing the first thing about how paedophiles think, I'd imagine they'd be more turned on by pictures of childish innocence than childish sophistication.

When I was young I was in a different position to Marcia's daughter. I was pushed into modelling by my fashion professor mother who would get me walking down catwalks in horribly fashionable tea dresses and French schoolgirl coats, complete with long white socks and patent leather shoes. I hated every single stressful, embarrassing, boring, unpaid minute of it. Every single "Ooh" and "Aaah" made me squirm. And after standing in the Brighton Pavilion in a tight silk party dress all day under burning lights with Norman Parkinson snapping away, I remember fainting, to the shrieks and curses of the fashion editor who was doing the shoot. She refused to speak to me all the way back in the train.

However, had I been paid and seen it as a lucrative job of work rather than a favour I'd been manipulated into by my mother, I think I would have enjoyed it enormously. My mini-career would have boosted my self-esteem no end. And the money can be considerable. Marcia's daughter could be encouraged to spend a bit, but to save vast chunks to put down on a flat when she gets older. If it's the choice between modelling and a paper round – nearly as boring and stressful and ex-

hausting as modelling – there's no question of what the answer is. As a hairdresser friend of mine said, "They may screw her up, darling, but at least she'll make loads of dosh."

But I don't think they will screw her up. Marcia could go with her on some shoots, and it's certainly not in the model agency's interests to create a monster, a sulky narcissistic prima donna. They'll want to keep her as sweet and young as possible; she'll be easier to manage.

There is an idea that children these days become adults too quickly. There is actually another argument, that you never hear, which is that children don't grow up quickly enough. The whole idea of such a long "childhood" and the innocence surrounding it only came into being in the Victorian era. Not all, but some children, are naturally ready for work, at least part-time, at a younger age than 16.

As long as Marcia's daughter is capable of taking the odd job while keeping up with her school work and her friends, what harm can there be in her earning a bomb now and again, and being made to feel wonderful and confident at the same time? She should make the most of the opportunities that are offered in life; they rarely come twice. And if she's got it, she should not only flaunt it but grab the money while she can. When her bust and hips develop, after all, she may find the only job on offer is on a supermarket checkout.

WHAT READERS SAY

Go for it, if she's mature. I STARTED modelling at 14 (against everyone's advice). It boosted my confidence and has enriched my life. You learn social skills and independence, and have loads of fun. I worked on weekends and holidays but finished my A-levels with good grades. If you think your daughter is stable enough to say "no thanks" to men, drugs, and over-zealous dietary programmes, and still do her homework, it would be a shame to deprive her of the advantages of modelling. To a girl who's got both feet on the ground, the modelling world is no more dangerous than your local high street. Perhaps you could accompany her to shoots until both of you feel more comfortable.

On the other hand, if you think she's not strong enough to face semi-grown-up life yet,

she has nothing to lose by waiting a few years. Her physical prime is most likely years ahead, and it may be that she'll be better equipped to make the best of it then. Who knows, it may turn out that she doesn't like modelling anyway – trudging around offices and having to look great all the time can be discouraging too. But that's something she'll have to find out for herself. If you were Kate Moss's mother, would you really have said "no"? M Hansen, London N5

Her outlook is paramount. MODELLING is an uncertain business and only for the confident and mature. At the age of 12, your daughter may well be too young – especially if her childishness is compromised by her appearing in pictures which are overtly sexual. Added to that, the amount of money models can earn would set her apart from her contemporaries.

Only let her do it if you think she is mature enough to cope

with the attention and the inevitable rejection. Make sure you monitor her pictures and the agency's role constantly. Above all, make sure you protect her against the drugs, eating disorders and exploitation that the industry is rife with. But if you can do all this – go ahead. The financial rewards are huge. Georgina Paterson, London SW15

Share your good fortune. I IMAGINE the source of Marcia's unease is the narcissism and exploitation tied up with the fashion industry. But instead of an attempt to embark on an ethical discussion or a heavy-handed refusal to let her daughter work for the agency, Marcia should praise her daughter's beauty, congratulate her on her good sense and harness that other powerful instinct in young people towards altruism. Then they could decide together to which of their favourite charities or pressure

groups her daughter would like to give part of her fee. Emily Bayliss, Newport

Be ready for disappointment. ABOUT a year ago, my daughter, Susan, who is now 14, was approached by a model agency at a dance studio. They made all kinds of glamorous promises and we agreed to have a first photo session. I was proud to see Susan coping with this experience – she had enormous fun. Of course, she expected to get modelling offers in the following months. You can imagine what it was like at home during that time. I was anxious that her performance at school would suffer but quite the contrary – she seemed to grow in self-confidence after the session.

However, we didn't hear anything more from the agency. It has been disappointing, but Susan has gained a lot from the experience. If I were you, I'd let her try it out and see what comes of it. Henri Doern, London W1

NEXT WEEK'S DILEMMA

WE MOVED into a flat three years ago, with a freeholder from hell. She is drunk, abusive and, frankly, mad. We can't go into the garden, even though it is ours, because she throws water over us and screams abuse from the windows; we have tried to get planning permission for an extension but though the council is keen, she has always blocked it because of an extremely badly written lease. We have been trying to sell it, unsuccessfully,

from a month after we moved in. Now a lovely couple want to buy it. She is pregnant; they too have fantasies about an extension, and using the garden, but haven't noticed the drawbacks in the lease because they are doing the conveyancing themselves. Do we sell the flat to them, or warn them? My husband says we will never sell it if we warn every potential buyer of the pitfalls, but this is such a lovely couple. Yours sincerely, Clara

Letters are welcome, and everyone who has a suggestion quoted will be sent a bouquet from Interflora. Send comments and suggestions to Virginia Ironside at the Features Department, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL (fax: 0171-293 2182), by Tuesday morning. If you have a dilemma of your own that you would like to share, please let me know.

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Lloyd Bridges

AFTER more than 20 years as an actor in theatre and cinema, Lloyd Bridges found international fame as an underwater investigator in the television series *Sea Hunt*. Twenty-three years later, his career in eclipse, he found new fame by spoofing his own macho image in the film *Airplane*.

He was then 67, but looked far younger, thanks to regular exercise; he played tennis, skied, jogged, and, of course, swam. Perhaps the reason for the relentless physical regime that kept him looking so lean and virile for more than seven decades is that President William Howard Taft once presented him with a trophy for being America's Fattest Baby.

Bridges wasn't the first actor in his family; his father, Lloyd Bridges, Senior, had played in silent films. While studying political science at UCLA, Lloyd Jr joined the University Dramatic Society and appeared in classic and contemporary plays. After graduating, he acted in various stock companies, and toured in a production of *The Taming of the Shrew* before moving to New York. After two uneventful years, he and some actor friends formed "The Playroom Club", one of the first off-Broadway theatre companies. Bridges made his Broadway debut as an extra in a production of *Othello* (1937), co-starring Walter Huston and Brian Aherne, and had better roles in Coteau's *The Infernal Machine* (1937) and Eugene O'Neill's *Sweeney and the Elders* (1940). Spotted by the film executive Sidney Buchman, he was signed to a contract with Columbia Pictures at \$75 a week.

His first film was *The Lone Wolf Takes a Chance* (1941), one of a long series of *Lone Wolf* "B" features churned out by Columbia. The studio had other series, of course, and Bridges appeared in most of them; in

Blondie Goes to College (1942), *Alias Boston Blackie* (also 1942) and *The Crime Doctor's Strangest Case* (1943), as well as in slapstick two-reelers, a serial, and such "A" features as *Here Comes Mr Jordan* (1941), *The Talk of the Town* (1942), *The Commandos Strike at Dawn* (1943) and *Sahara* (1943). In his four years at the studio, he made more than 45 films.

"To get their money's worth out of me, they'd put me in two or three pictures a week," Bridges recalled. "As a result, I worked with a lot of stars like Ronald Colman, Cary Grant, Paul Muni and Humphrey Bogart. They were real stars."

The turning-point in his career came after he left Columbia and appeared in Lewis Milestone's *A Walk in the Sun* (1945), one of the few Hollywood films about the Second World War that had any distinction. The same war formed the background of *Home of the Brave* (1949), one of the first liberal films on the subject of colour prejudice. It was the story of an African-American GI (James Edwards), who, on a Japanese-held atoll in the South Pacific, suffered psychological paralysis after the death of Bridges, his fellow soldier and only friend. Bridges also scored as an arrogant ex-Nazi army officer in *The White Tower* (1950) and as Gary Cooper's treacherous deputy in *High Noon* (1952).

That same year, he appeared with Lee J. Cobb in another western, *The Tall T*. In June 1953, Cobb testified to the House Committee on Un-American Activities that Bridges was once a Communist. The resultant dip in his career took Bridges back to Broadway, where he appeared in the play *Dead Pigeon* (1953), but the production itself was dead in three weeks. What film work came his way was of a minor nature until 1956, when he played

Katharine Hepburn's mean-spirited brother in *The Rainmaker* (1956).

Because he had once seen him play a sponge-diver in a minor movie called *16 Fathoms Deep* (1948), the television producer Ivan Tors offered Bridges the role of the subaqueous Mike Nelson in *Sea Hunt*. The series was turned down by every American network, in the belief that a weekly undersea adventure show would soon run out of story ideas. They were proved resoundingly wrong; *Sea Hunt* ran in syndication from 1957 to 1961, notching up 156 episodes, and making Bridges into a household name. He also directed some segments of *Sea Hunt*, and his daughter Lucinda, as well as his now famous sons Jeff and Beau, appeared in the show.

Although he made occasional films such as *Around the World Under the Sea* and *Attack on the Iron Coast* (both 1968), most of Bridges's post-*Sea Hunt* roles now came from television; he played a freelance journalist in *The Lloyd Bridges Show* (1962-63), a disillusioned cavalry officer in the western series *The Loner* (1965-66), and starred in many small-budget television movies. In 1974, the magazine *Film Dope*, while recognising that Bridges's acting potential was stronger than ever, wrote that television quickies were "now his staple diet, but what else can be expected from somebody who has voluntarily spent the last 15 years of his screen career underwater, being upstaged by various sharks and octopi?"

Six years, and many TV quickies later, Bridges's career was given a surprise shot in the arm by *Airplane*, the outrageous lampoon of air disaster films, in which he played McCroskey, the harried air-traffic controller. "What a week to give up smoking!" he cried, filling his lungs with tobacco fumes. As



Lean and virile: Bridges in *High Noon*, 1952

Photograph: Ronald Grant Archive

tension mounted, McCroskey declared it was an equally inappropriate week to give up drinking, and, finally, glue-stuffing, each time abusing his system appropriately.

Airplane was written and directed by Jim Abrahams, David Zucker and Jerry Zucker. Abrahams directed and co-wrote *Hot Shots!* (1991), in which Bridges managed to top his McCroskey performance as mad Admiral "Tug" Benson, who made his entrance stepping confidently off a 727 before the steps had been rolled out, and plummeting, still saluting, on to

the tarmac. Later, in this frenzied parody of *Top Gun*, he told his young pilots: "I've personally flown over 194 missions, and I've been shot down on every one. I've never landed a plane in my life!"

Two years later, the sequel, *Hot Shots! Part Deux*, revealed that "Tug" Benson had left the navy and become the President of the United States. Even more demented than before, Benson greeted Charlie Sheen with a warm: "You're the son I never had. No wonder I didn't recognise you." Christopher Tooker wrote in the *Daily Mail*:

"The best thing in the movie is veteran actor Lloyd Bridges."

He appeared with his son Beau in the television series *Harts of the West* (1993), and with his son Jeff in *Blown Away* (1994). "I play Jeff's father-figure," he told an interviewer. "Which obviously didn't require much method acting."

Dick Vosburgh

Lloyd Vernon Bridges, actor: born San Leandro, California 15 January 1913; married 1938 Dorothy Simpson (two sons, one daughter); died Los Angeles 10 March 1998.

B. A. Santamaria

B. A. SANTAMARIA was one of the most influential figures in Australian political life for more than two decades, yet he never sat in parliament or even joined a political party. He will be remembered as the man who helped to cause a split in the Australian Labor Party in the mid-1950s so devastating that it kept Labor out of power for almost 20 years.

Santamaria's main crusade was against Communism, especially its spread among trade unions after the Depression of the Thirties. He was a conservative Catholic who enlisted the aid of the Church in his political activities. And, long after Communism had been purged from Labor politics, Santamaria remained a leading polemicist and social commentator, attacking other movements such as economic rationalism, feminism, gay rights and anything that threatened the sanctity of family life. His primary pulpit was a column in the *Australian*, a national newspaper, which he wrote for 33 years until he became ill from a brain tumour at the end of last year.

Bartholomew Augustine Santamaria (he was known as Bob, but always wrote under the formal name B.A. Santamaria) was born to Sicilian immigrant parents in the inner Melbourne suburb of Brunswick, then a working-class neighbourhood. He was a brilliant student, and it was while he was studying Law at the University of Melbourne in the 1930s that Santamaria became involved in the first of a series of groups attached to the Catholic Church that served as his political power base later. At university, he also met Daniel Mannix, then the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, a powerful figure who encouraged Santamaria to work against the rising influence of Communism in the unions. Santamaria later became Mannix's biographer.

The Labor Party at that time drew much of its support from Australia's Irish Catholic working class. By the early 1940s, the anti-Communist crusade became focused on a body called the Catholic Social Movement, known simply as "The Movement", an organisation whose members formed industrial groups to oppose Communist candidates at union elections. The seeds of the big Labor split of the 1950s were sown in the Movement's clandestine campaign. At its simplest, that split was one between the mainly Catholic right wing of the Labor Party and the non-Catholic left, particularly in the state of Victoria where the Movement had its roots.

The split burst into the open in 1954, when Herbert Evatt, then the Labor Party leader, publicly denounced Santamaria and his supporters for disloyalty to Labor. At the party's 1955 conference, Santamaria's supporters walked out and formed a breakaway party of their own, the Democratic Labor Party (DLP). Santamaria himself nev-

er joined the DLP, but he exerted strong influence over it as a campaigner, organiser and writer. His main platform was as president of the National Civic Council, the lay body that succeeded the Movement in 1957 and of which Santamaria remained president until he died.

Under Australia's preferential voting system, the DLP gave its second-preference votes at successive general elections to the conservative Liberal-National coalition. The effect of this was cataclysmic for Labor. Thanks largely to DLP preference votes, the coalition - first elected in 1949 - stayed in power for 23 unbroken years. Labor did not return to power until 1972 under Gough Whitlam after shedding its old socialist tags and reforming itself as a party of the middle ground, a process taken even further in the 1980s and 1990s under the leaderships of Bob Hawke and Paul Keating. The DLP no longer exists.

During Labor's wilderness years, Santamaria's influence on the ruling coalition was at its strongest in foreign policy. He was a leading proponent of one of the Cold War's most strident and excitable war-cries, the "threat from the north". This was the theory that Australia's security was at imminent risk from the "downward thrust of Asian Communism", emanating from China. It helped to drive Australia into the Vietnam war, to which the country committed 50,000 troops, of whom 500 died in combat.

In his crusade against the totalitarianism of Communism, Bob Santamaria was proved



Santamaria: polemicist

eventually to be a man before his time. On many of his other causes, though, he appeared in his later years as a man increasingly out of his time. Yet he kept the respect even of some of his lifelong enemies in the Labor Party for his unwavering dedication to his cause and his contribution to intellectual life as a powerful public speaker and the author of 10 books.

Robert Milliken

Bartholomew Augustine Santamaria, polemicist and commentator: born Melbourne, Victoria 14 August 1915; President, National Civic Council 1957-1998; married 1939 Helen Power (died 1980; three sons, five daughters); 1963 Dorothy Jensen (died Melbourne 25 February 1998).

Barbara Kaye

"MINDING My Own Business" was the title of her book-seller husband's memoirs, and it might have been Barbara Kaye's motto in her long and courageous life.

Percy Muir was still a junior director of the great firm of Elkin Mathews (founded in 1895) when they married in March 1937, but had become *de facto* its manager. He was 42, she was 28. Almost at once they were plunged into the nightmare of a lost libel case, from which they were only rescued by her small savings. But she was too realistic and too fond of Percy to be put off by this inauspicious beginning, and was soon plunged into the last excitement of book-selling in London before the Second World War.

They shared a house in St John's Wood, north London, with S.S. Kotliarsky, the friend



Kaye: tenacity

of Katherine Mansfield and D.H. Lawrence, who planted a pear-tree in their garden. She helped Percy, taking part in the task of smuggling the manuscript of Mozart's "Haffner" Symphony to safety, and organised the move of the firm to the country, when Ian Fleming,

his newest director and already at the Admiralty, warned them that war was imminent.

She settled down to life in the rambling old house at Takeley, near Bishop's Stortford in Hertfordshire, which now became the Elkin Mathews premises. She had been born in Suffolk, the daughter of a professional writer, and began a career as a journalist. Now, despite having to maintain a household that now included two small children as well as her husband and Elisabeth, the German girl who was the sole relic of the bookshop staff, she found time to write and to start a canteen for evacuees. When peace returned (though not plenty), she met a new challenge, helping Percy rebuild old links with his continental colleagues and heal the wounds of war. He was largely respon-

sible for putting these relationships on a formal basis through the foundation of the International League of Antiquarian Booksellers. She contrived, despite rationing, to entertain his colleagues, new and old, and the trade owes her a great debt for her part in this post-war revival.

Little of this is reflected in the novels that she wrote now and later, 13 in all, under the pen name Barbara Kaye. They all dealt with contemporary life and its problems, seen very much in a local context. *Black-market Green* (1950) was a portrait of a village in wartime, *Festival at Froke* (1951) reflects the impact of the Festival of Britain and *Champion's Mead* (1951) the foundation of Harlow New Town, not far away. All this was observed at first hand, for she was always in the thick

of things, sitting on the district council, presiding over the local Women's Institute and organising entertainments for the village, fete, besides doing all sorts of good that her energetic and gregarious temperament suggested to her. To be a friend of hers was to be a friend for life.

The growth of Stansed airport finally made life at Takeley no longer bearable, and they moved to Blakeney in Norfolk. There Percy died in 1979. It was the end of an era in the history of Elkin Mathews. By now Barbara was the sole member of its staff, and might well have accepted a good offer for the stock and wound up the business. But giving up was not in her nature. With her usual courage and tenacity, she kept it going, did up the premises and took to going to book fairs and auctions. To her delight, her son

David, already a bookseller, came to join her in 1987.

She went on writing, publishing a continuation of *Minding My Own Business* (1956), aptly titled *The Company We Keep* (1986), and a sequel, *Second Impression* (1995). She sailed her dinghy off the Norfolk coast into her eighties, gardened indefatigably, and would go halfway across England to the Wordsworth Trust book-collectors' weekends until last year. She faced the ills of old age when they came without complaint and, as always, with courage.

Nicolas Barker

Barbara Kenrick Gowing (Barbara Kaye), writer and bookseller: born Saxonmarch, Suffolk 4 August 1908; married 1937 P.H. Muir (died 1979; one son, one daughter); died Blakeney, Norfolk 21 February 1998.

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

DEATHS

MITCHELL: Makolm, 1928-1998. Musician, co-founder of the band The Beatles. Loving and adored husband, father and grandfather. On 4 March, peacefully, after lengthy and beautiful coping with his long illness. In tribute, donations to St Wilfred's Hospice, c/o Reynolds, Funeral Directors, 31 High Street, Bognor Regis, West Sussex PO21 1RE.

IN MEMORIAM

BARR: Frederick, died on Thursday 12 March 1992. Much loved.

Announcements for Deaths, Births, Marriages & Deaths (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephoned to 071-293 2012 (24-hour answering machine 071-293 2011) or faxed to 071-293 2010, and are charged at £4.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements (notice, functions, forthcoming marriages, marriages) must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line (VAT extra). They should be accompanied by a daytime telephone number.

THE OBITUARIES e-mail address is obituaries@independent.co.uk

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Duke of Edinburgh, President and Honorary Life Fellow of the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, chairs the 1998 Prince Philip Lecture and attends a dinner at 4 John Adam Street, London WC2. The Prince of Wales visits Gwentville and Calio College, Cambridge.

Changing of the Guard
The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am. P Company Scots Guards mounts the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, hand provided by the Welsh Guards.

Birthdays

Sir Anthony Acland, Provost of Eton College, former diplomat, 68; Dr Giovanni Agnelli, chairman, Istituto Finanziario Industriale, 77; Mr Rudolph Agnew, chairman, Lasso, 64; Mr Edward Albee, playwright, 70; Mr Ronald Alley, artist and former Keeper of Modern Art, Tate Gallery, 72; Mrs Virginia Bottomley MP, 50; Mr Norbert Brainin, solo violinist, 75; Sir Geoffrey de Bellaigue, former Director of the Royal Collection, 67; Mr Willie Duggan, rugby footballer, 48; Mr John Goss, writer and editor, 63; Mr Peter Gwynn-Jones, Garter Principal King of Arms, 58; Lord Hogg of Cumbernauld, former MP, 60; Mr Philip Jones, former Principal, Trinity College of Music, London, 70; Mr Anthony Lochuis, former vice-chairman, S.G. Warburg & Co, 62; Mr David Mellor QC, former MP, 48; Miss Liza Minnelli, actress and singer, 52; Mr David Milnare, interior decorator, 59; Mr Roland Myle, barrister and former government minister, 70; Mr Patrick Proctor, painter, 62; Mr Ralph Shapely, composer and conductor, 77; Viscount Trenchard, director, Robert Fleming & Co, 47; Miss Gudrun Uno, actress, 72; Miss Elizabeth Vaughan, operatic soprano, 61; Lord Wallace of Saltaire, professor of International Studies, 57; Mr Paul Way, golfer, 35; Mr David Oliver Williams, former General Secretary, COHSE, 72; Mr David Wilmut, Chief Constable, Greater Manchester Police, 55; Miss Gwennie Withers, actress, 81.

Anniversaries

Births: John Aubrey, antiquary, 1626; George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne, philosopher, 1685; Thomas Augustine Arne, composer ("Rule, Britannia"), 1710; John Frederic Daniell, chemist, 1790; Sir Joseph Presnwick, geologist, 1812; Gustav Robert Kirchhoff, physicist, 1824; Sir August Friedrich Maute, conductor, 1825; Benjamin Williams Leader, painter, 1831; Capt Charles Cunningham Boycott, land agent (from whom came the word "boycott" in Ireland), 1832; Felix-Alexandre Guilmant, organist and composer, 1837;

Sir William Henry Perkin, chemist, 1838; Adolph Simon Ochs, newspaper proprietor, 1858; Gabriele D'Annunzio, poet and politician, 1863; William Halse Rivers Rivers, anthropologist, 1864; Kernal Ataturk (Mustapha Kemal), soldier and statesman, 1881; Philip Guedalla, historian, 1889; Vasko Fomich Nikijalov, dancer, 1890; Kylie (Kathleen) Tennant, novelist, 1912; Gordon MacRae, actor and singer, 1921; Jack (Jean-Louis) Kerouac, novelist, 1922; Deaths: Innocent I, pope, 417; St Gregory I, pope, 604; Raulf Hildon, author of the Polytechnicon history, 1364; Cesare Borgia, cardinal, soldier and politician, killed 1507; John Bull, organist and composer, 1628; Frans van Mieris the Elder, painter, 1681; Alessandro Magnasco, painter, 1749; James Tibbitts Wilmore, line engraver, 1863; Gaetano Milanesi, scholar and painter, 1895; George Westinghouse, inventor, 1914; Hilaire, Comte de Charbonnet, inventor of rayon, 1924; Sun Yat-sen, Chinese leader, 1925; Edward Wylis Scripps, journalist, at sea 1926; William T. Deane, artist, 1929; Ivar Kreuger, industrialist and swindler, 1932; Charles-Marie Jean-Albert Widor, organist and composer, 1937; Sir William Bragg, scientist, 1942; Anne Frank, diarist, at Bergen-Belsen 1945; Tolchard Evans, popular composer and conductor, 1978; Arnold Ridley, playwright and actor, 1964; Sir Harold Hobson, drama critic, 1992. On this day: the Bank of Stamford was fought at Horn, near Exton, between Edward IV and the Lancastrians, 1470; the Bermuda became an English colony, 1609; the United States Post Office was established, 1789; the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, London (third theatre), opened, 1794; the Sikhs surrendered to the British at Rawalpindi, 1849; Verdi's *Simus Bacchus* was first performed, Venice 1857; Britain annexed Basutoland, 1868; the Albery Theatre, London, opened as the New Theatre, 1903; the first main line electric train in the UK ran from Liverpool to Southport, 1904; the Girl Guides (later Scouts) movement was started in the United States by Juliette Gordon Low, 1912; the

foundation stone of the Australian capital Canberra was laid, 1913; in Britain a 30mph speed limit was imposed for cars in built-up areas, 1935; the coronation took place of Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli, as Pope Pius XII, 1939; Finland signed a peace treaty which made territorial concessions to the Soviet Union, 1940; Mauritius became independent, 1968. Today is the Feast Day of St Alege of Winchester, St Bernard of Cugna, St Maximilian of Theveste, St Paul Aurelian or of Leon, Saints Peter, Gorgonius and Dorotheus, St Seraphim of Eins and St Theophanes the Chronicler.

Lectures

National Gallery: Mari Griffith, "Mothers (2): Zurbarn, Saint Margaret of Antioch", 1pm.
Victoria and Albert Museum: Caroline Rimell, "Chinoiserie and British Ceramics", 2.30pm.
National Portrait Gallery: Jacob Simon, "The Art of the Picture Frame (2): the 18th century", 1.10pm.
Gresham College (Barnard's Inn Hall, London EC1): Professor Richard Holloway, "Negotiating the Ethical Hierarchy: the politics of abortion", 5.30pm.

Appointments

Mr Robert Ian Martin, to be Regional Chairman of Social Security Appeal Tribunals, Medical Appeal Tribunals, Disability Appeal Tribunals and Child Support Appeal Tribunals for the Midlands and East Anglia Region.
His Honour Judge Dyer, Mr Nicholas Davidson QC, Miss Rosemary Horwood-Smyth QC, Mr Stuart Brown QC, Mr Mark Everall QC and Mr David Fitzway, to be Masters of the Bench of the Inner Temple.
Lord Hardie QC, to be an Honorary Bench of the Middle Temple.
Mr T.M. Ashe QC, to be Master of the Bench of the Middle Temple.
Brigadier John Pearson RM, to be Receiver General of Canterbury Cathedral.

LAW REPORT: 12 MARCH 1998

Court had jurisdiction to add charges

Regina v Stephenson; Court of Appeal (Criminal Division)
(Lord Justice Buxton, Mr Justice Rouse and the Common Serjeant) 5 March 1998

WHERE offences charged against a young person which were not suitable for summary trial were transferred to the Crown Court for trial on indictment, the court had jurisdiction to add to the indictment summary offences which were closely linked to them, and which had previously been withdrawn in the magistrates' court.

The Court of Appeal dismissed the appeal of Paul John Stephenson against his conviction of one count of indecent assault and two counts of assault occasioning actual bodily harm.

The appellant, who was aged 17, had appeared before the youth court, charged with two cases of assault occasioning actual bodily harm and three cases of indecent assault. All the alleged offences concerned the same complainant.

Lord Justice Buxton said that the youth court had de-

termined that the indecent assault counts were not suitable for summary trial. They were offences to which section 53 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 applied, and could therefore be committed for trial to the Crown Court under section 23 of the Magistrates Courts Act 1980. On the same date, the appellant had pleaded guilty to the two charges of assault occasioning actual bodily harm, but the youth court had determined that those pleas should be treated not as final pleas but simply as an indication of his intention as to plea.

The principal crown prosecutor responsible for the proceedings against the appellant in the youth court had taken the view that the actual bodily harm charges were closely linked to the indecent assault charges and that they should all be tried together in the Crown Court. She had therefore applied for the indecent assault charges to be transferred to the Crown Court and, having obtained confirmation that no plea in respect of the actual bodily harm charges had been recorded on the previous occasion, had applied to withdraw those charges in the magistrates'

court, with the intention that they should be added to the indictment in the Crown Court.

The appeal had arisen because it was contended that it was not open to the Crown Court to add those counts to the indictment because the offences should have been dealt with at the magistrates' court in accordance with section 24 of the 1980 Act.

Where a person under 18 appeared before a youth court on an information charging him with an indictable offence not covered by section 53(2) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 he should be tried summarily. Section 24 of the 1980 Act, however, provided that that step should be taken only when a juvenile appeared before the youth court on an information. In the present case, once the prosecution had taken the step of withdrawing the actual bodily harm charges, the appellant had not been before the magistrates' court on such an information, the only information then before the court being that charging the indecent assaults.

Counsel for the appellant said that did not matter. The appellant had originally been before the court on such an in-

formation and should therefore have been proceeded against summarily. Once that step had not been taken, section 24(1) of the 1980 Act had the effect of depriving the Crown Court of jurisdiction over those charges, however much joinder of the actual bodily harm counts was otherwise within the Crown Court's powers.

Section 24 was, however, directed only at the procedure of the magistrates' court. It could not operate so as to deprive the Crown Court of jurisdiction to consider the joinder of a count such as the actual bodily harm counts in the present case. The Crown Court had jurisdiction to decide in an appropriate case that joinder of such a count would be an abuse of the process of the Crown Court. Nothing of the sort had been suggested in the present case. The prosecution had taken the steps it had so that one count could properly consider all of the related matters. The appellant had always admitted his guilt of the actual bodily harm counts, and there had been no substantial reason put before the Crown Court why that count should not deal with that matter.

Kate O'Hanlon, Barrister

John 10:15-20

THE INDEPENDENT

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Prescott is bigger than this farce

THE PRESCOTT saga teeters between broad farce and high drama. This chapter of allegations and investigations is more reminiscent of the dark days of the French Fourth Republic than late Nineties, post-Nolan Britain. Give or take a *Spycatcher* we simply are not used to this kind of thing. Confusion abounds, as the bemused Humberside Constabulary interview and inquire. It is important to get two things clear.

The first is that John Prescott, in his capacities as Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Environment, Transport and the Regions has other, much more important fish to fry. Not every newspaper allegation is worth reading, especially if it is printed in a Sunday with an axe to grind. Meanwhile anyone who travels on the London Underground, together with motorists, lorry drivers and rail users has more pressing concerns. New Labour has some critical decisions to take on the transport infrastructure. The Treasury is signalling hard that Gordon "hair shirt" Brown wants to keep a tight lid on spending. Even if the so-called Golden Rule is applied under which government borrowing should total no more than the government invests, getting capital out of the Treasury is going to be a hard task. Mr Prescott, who is shaping up as one of the Cabinet's most serious players, is the man to put the arguments with force and clarity. Any distraction is unwelcome. The same point applies in force to all those concerned either to get into social housing - accommodation for lower income people provided by councils or housing associations - or ensure that the existing stock of public housing is maintained. There is a strong case for investment, at least from the financial year commencing 1999; without it housing will fall into disrepair and require costlier attention later. Mr Prescott needs to be fighting fit to make the case.

The second point relates to Kingston upon Hull. It was never, it's true, as depressed as some other coastal cities, despite the decline of deep-sea fishing. But the indices of social deprivation, educational under-achievement and urban decline register strongly for the city. In recent years a concerted effort at reinvention has been made; the city has started to look better; useful local partnerships between public and private sector have been forged. A one-class town (the middle classes traditionally decamped to the countryside around) is even beginning to attract a more socially diverse population. For Hull's efforts to be side-tracked by the miasma of allegation and investigation would be more than regrettable - it would delay regeneration and potentially blight further generations of Hull young people.

A certain degree of worldliness is required. Large-scale housing renewal has been taking place in Hull. If during the course of the process of property acquisition and development not every penny was fully accounted for, receipted and annotated, if not every deal was entirely above board - would that really be worth this kind of attention? What other stories emanating from a provincial city get this kind of noise... again, listen closely and the sound of grinding axes is audible. Meanwhile, in another neck of the woods... Yesterday we reported, on the basis of a National Audit Office report, on the "loss" to the public purse of some £300m in the course of water privatisation and consequent pension arrangements. Nobody, however, is being held responsible. No one is facing court charges. No one is being investigated by police or auditors. Meanwhile in Hull petty sums are in play; huge investigative effort is chasing allegations of mayoral over-indebtedness. A sense of proportion is needed.

Someone somewhere appears to be desperately anxious to implicate Mr Prescott and, presumably, discredit him. The early signs are that the effort - if that is what it is - is endearing English, bumbling and amateur. The very suspicion that the Deputy Prime Minister might be the target of politicking ne'er-do-wells immediately engenders sympathy for him. He has important work to do on the nation's behalf. The sooner he is able to get on with it, free of distraction, the better.

Buttling for Britain



A COUNTRY, economists tell us, should play to its strengths. And it still seems, after all these years, that one of our national advantages lies below stairs. Britain buttles better. A new school is opening to train butlers for the world. There clearly is a niche in the services market. With the growth of affluence - generated by people who have less and less time for domestic work themselves - the demand for at-home services grows and grows. Technology helps but machines do not open doors or serve guests.

Yet the problem with butlers, at least in this country, is the old social class associations - witness our insatiable enthusiasm for Edwardian costume dramas in which the lower orders still knew their place. Can a butler buttle in, as it were, a purely functional fashion, without reinforcing the superiority of his employers and the inferiority of the other servants. Did we say "his"? Surely the new British buttling school should also be aiming to recruit women. Female butlers would break the mould, making it more of a general service job than evidence of social status. Women would do a butler's work as well, just as they would make good sommeliers and already make great chefs. In the new service order some shaking up of the genders is long overdue. Traditionally the lower downstairs you get the more female staffing. In future let's hear it for Mrs Hudson and Mr Bridges.

Black beasts take a rain check in the ball park of today



MILES KINGSTON

...AND IT'S very nice to welcome back today our linguistic expert, Dr Wordsmith, to tackle all your knotty verbal problems. So here he is, the Dr Johnson of *nos jours*.

Dear Dr Wordsmith, Why, oh why do people insist on using foreign expressions like "de nos jours"? Why not just say "the Dr Johnson of today"?

Dr Wordsmith writes: There are several reasons why people use foreign expressions. These include arrogance, snobbery, exhibitionism, pedantry, playfulness, superiority and a desire to show that one has had the money to spend time abroad. Nothing wrong with any of these. It's what keeps a pedant like me going. But I also think that there may be an age-old desire to spice our conversation with exotic flavours. As far as meaning goes, nothing is added by saying "comme il faut", "de rigueur" or "de trop". But it certainly adds a little welcome flavour

to our conversation, like slipping in a bit of garlic. And remember one very odd thing: we actually get most of our foreign expressions from an English-speaking country! Yes, most foreign phrases come here from the USA, but as the Americans speak another variant of English, it never occurs to us that "taking a rain check" is just as foreign as "Zeitgeist" or "en suite". We talk about ball parks. We have no idea what a ball park is. Dear Dr Wordsmith, What IS a ball park? Dr Wordsmith writes: I have no idea. Incidentally, if you ARE going to use a foreign expression, can I beg you all PLEASE to pronounce it right? I get mightily irritated by all those people who pronounce "macho" and "machismo" as "macko" and "mackismo". They are pronounced "matcho" and "matchismo"! Even the top people get things wrong. The other day on *Desert Island Discs* Miss Sue Lawley pronounced the Spanish composer Albeniz as "Albenits",

making him sound like a Pole or Czech. It should of course have been more like "Al-bay-nith". Pah! Dear Dr Wordsmith, I sometimes get the impression that Sue Lawley is your black beast. Is this so?

Dr Wordsmith writes: My WHAT? Dear Dr Wordsmith, I meant your "bête noire", but I was putting it into English for you.

Dr Wordsmith writes: Oh, No, I have no particular animus against Sue Lawley (or should I say "animum", being accusative?) No, my current "bête noire" is the word "strand", a term which has been adopted by the BBC and other media to suggest that they know what they are doing. There are many words like this today, including such dreadful words as "community" and "agenda" and "empowerment" and the even more dreadful "tranche", but "strand" is one particularly adopted by the BBC. "Our education strand" they will say, or "Our drama

strand", as if to suggest a strong network of education and drama programmes. Very often it is the opposite. Very often they talk about a "live drama strand" just when live drama is dwindling. But it gets worse than that. One programme in the *Radio Times* the other day advertised itself as belonging to "the strand that listens". We now have a listening strand! Libby Purves on *Midweek* the other day started the programme by wondering if there was any strand that linked all the guests. So a strand is just something that joins things together, is it? No, of course it isn't. It is just Libby Purves not thinking about how to use language properly. Perhaps her mind was elsewhere. Perhaps she was planning writing another article defending Rupert Murdoch for *The Times*... Dear Dr Wordsmith, Calm down, calm down, old chap! Might I suggest that Libby Purves is another of your "bêtes noires"? Or should I say bugbears?

Dr Wordsmith writes: You may say anything you like, sir, but you will never convince me that there is any such thing as a "bugbear". It is a very common mistake, sir, to suppose that because a word exists, therefore the thing exists also. People talk about unicorns, but they never lived. People may talk about the peace process in Northern Ireland, but that is all they can do, for there is no such thing, depend on it. Dear Dr Wordsmith, Why have you started talking in this strange way? Dr Wordsmith writes: Why, sir, because I am the Dr Johnson of *nos jours*. Because, sir, I feel in my bones that the puns are open and because I think it is time for us to adjourn for the first drink of the day. Ciao, signor!

Drunk or sober, Dr Wordsmith will be back again soon to tackle more of your linguistic posers.

PICTURE OF THE DAY



Man of the hills: a North Wales sheep farmer and his dog on the mountains at sunset

Photograph: Steve Peake

LETTERS

Post letters to Letters to the Editor and include a daytime telephone number
Fax 0171 293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Freeing of McAliskey

YOUR headline "decision to free McAliskey made on political grounds" (11 March) was not even supported by the story beneath it, still less by the truth.

I did not discuss the case with any other minister outside the Home Office, nor did I receive representations from any other minister about what you alleged are wider political implications. I took my decision having considered the representations put forward by Roisin McAliskey's solicitors, having regard to the requirements of the Extradition Act 1989. The material before me included two detailed medical reports, one from the doctors who have been treating Roisin McAliskey since the middle of 1997 and one by a leading forensic psychiatrist retained by the Home Office.

By law, I am required not to return a fugitive if I believe that it would be unjust or oppressive to do so. That was the basis for the decision in this case as it was in another case which I also dealt with last weekend (wholly unrelated to any terrorist allegations) where again, on overwhelming medical evidence, I decided not to order return. I took both decisions carefully, and as is required of me by the 1989 Act.

You were also wrong to imply that I had "waited" before making a decision in this case. I received the papers last Friday, read them over the weekend and made and announced my decision on Monday.

JACK STRAW
Home Secretary
Home Office

Internet curbs

IT IS an enigma that the glut of information on the Internet spawns growing paranoia about being starved of this commodity. Jason Burton (letter, 7 March) assumes that rating of content is about reducing the need for government to regulate the Internet, when there is no evidence of it seeking to control legal material.

Mr Burton is right to be concerned about any apparent means of restricting the free flow of information. However, in over a year of de-

bate on this issue with governments, service providers and regulation bodies around the world, I have not come across any significant views that are not in the sole interests of protecting children and do not value the free speech of consenting adults. The beauty of the system we are working on is that it harnesses the technology to achieve both. The rating of the content is done by its producers, not third parties. The acceptance criteria are set by the user.

In fact the system as it already operates (RSACI ratings filtered through Internet Explorer 3) allows adult users to see everything, but to set limits for their offspring via password-controlled access. Personally I agree with Mr Burton that we should not be over-protective of our children, but that is my choice. Others are free to choose otherwise.

DAVID KERR
Chief Executive
Internet Watch Foundation
Oakington, Cambridgeshire

Save European TV

SUZANNE MOORE ("Spare the Tsetseflies", 11 March) is right to argue that parents should watch more TV with their kids. But she misses a key point: that our children have a right to a whole range of tales from their own society, Europe and the rest of the world. What they are actually able to receive has narrowed, as cable and satellite kids' channels just recycle imported US animation.

This also creates unfair competition with terrestrial channels, who do invest in home-made programmes. These terrestrial channels are coming under increased pressure to cut budgets for kids' programmes, in order to compete. Our kids are told that Europe and the world is their oyster. TV often delivers a different message: the visual diet of a hamburger.

Much can be done - global exchange of programmes, more co-pro-

duction; a European Kids Channel where we share the best of our programmes. Most importantly, we must retain the BBC Public Service Broadcasting as the best guarantor still that our kids will broaden their minds, taste and literacy while watching the box. CAROLE TONGUE-MEE (London East, Deb.)
Hford, Essex

Underground revolt

I AID and abet criminals, and shall continue to do so. Although the Court of Appeal has reinforced London Underground's vendetta against ticket touts ("Ticket touts lose appeal", 7 March), I shall continue to give away my travelcards for as long as the world's most expensive public transport system fails to deliver an adequate service.

I deeply resent paying the company's onerous levy for the privilege of squeezing myself onto its squalid, filthy, overcrowded trains; for patiently tolerating the "18 minutes to next train" indicator, with no announcement to explain or justify it, for queuing for 20 minutes in the morning at the one ticket window that is ever open at my local station when I forget to arrange to have the right change for the automatic machines in my pocket; for philosophically accepting that when the last trains fail to connect and I am dumped at a station far from home my travelcard is not valid on the night bus; for tolerating the rudeness of the very few staff ever seen on a station.

Until LUL pulls its socks up the touts have my unreserved backing. DAVID TREVOR-JONES
London SW17

I WOULD like to express my gratitude to the driver of the Silverlink Northampton to Euston train that I travelled on this morning. The train broke down, and was to sit on the tracks for well over an hour before

being shunted to the next station. However, the driver exercised great skill by ensuring that the train had come to rest in a tunnel.

I wonder if I will ever again enjoy the bliss of sitting on a train for such a length of time and not being subjected to people shouting into their mobile phones. ANDREW J CHISHOLM
Northampton

House sales

WITH respect to the proposed reform of estate agents' practices (leading article, 5 March), legislators may wish to consider the procedure here in Norway.

Viewing is publicised for one or two specific time periods, then bidding begins. Bids tend to be time-limited both on the buyer's side and the seller's (you have so many hours to enter a higher bid and the seller has a certain time period to decide whether to accept the bid). All bids are binding. It is also a legal requirement to disclose fully the state of the property, with the agent and seller liable for non-disclosure.

If your bid has been accepted there can be no gazumping. Typical time frames for a sale drop from months in the English system, to weeks, with sales and contracts being confirmed and sealed within days. DAVID MARTIN
Oslo, Norway

Defying Murdoch

IN THE matter of Murdoch, HarperCollins, *The Times* etc. Why not try saying "No"? Many years ago I was instructed by the proprietors of Penguin to cancel 100 contracts with Penguin authors. I refused. I reckon that people in top positions justify their high salaries by taking difficult and risky positions. PETER CALVOCORESSI
Bath

Doom for jazz

JAZZ WAS not KO'd by rock, as asserted by George Russell ("Ly-dian modes and all that jazz", 7 March). It was KO'd by James Caesar Petrillo, president of the American Federation of Musicians from 1940 until 1958. The two-year-long recording ban he called in 1942 spelled doom for the instrumental star bands, such as those of Count Basie, Benny Goodman, Jimmy Lunceford, Harry James and Artie Shaw, and paved the way for the current dictatorship of the vocalist - they, not being union members, had continued to record.

The coup de grâce was administered by those intellectuals who saw that jazz was becoming unpopular and might therefore be Art. This led to 15-minute bass solos, sheets of sound, free jazz and other phenomena that only a musician's mother could love.

Wynton Marsalis may be misguided in trying to breathe life into the old corpse, but at least his heart is in the right place. As for the Ly-dian mode, I care not a jot - nor the Dorian, Hypophrygian or Paragoric. They don't mean a thing if they ain't got that swing. CLIVE EXTON
London NI

Town and country

PETER DOREY (letter, 5 March) wonders why there was not a Countryside March under the Tory party. If they had introduced a "Foster Bill" against hunting there might well have been.

I am sick to death of hearing the mantra "70 per cent of people support the ban". That means that 30 per cent do not. This is a very large minority to have their views ridden over roughshod by Parliament on a matter which should be for individual conscience.

The Foster Bill has driven an ugly and unnecessary wedge between town and country to neither's benefit. LESLEY ELLIS
Alton, Hampshire

As Nato and the EU expand, beware a scowling Russia



RUPERT CORNWELL

THIS IS A TALE of two enlargements. One, that of the European Union, is being feted today in London. The European Conference is called, a worthy exercise in summitry, but a somewhat pointless one, alas, given that it was devised above all to humour Turkey, the Union's eternally jilted suitor. But having been jilted yet again last December, Ankara is staying away. So the heads of government of 26 present and aspiring EU members will assemble to deliberate – insofar as it is possible for so many to seriously deliberate in a couple of two-hour sessions either side of a state luncheon at Buckingham Palace – issues of common concern, like cross-border crime and the environment.

But no matter. "The meeting is the message" is the amended official catchphrase for the occasion. And, amid the ornate and gilded splendour of Lancaster House, so destructive of the critical faculties, who is to disagree? The enlargement of the EU to the east will be a long and monumentally complicated task. But it is undeniably a Good Thing, an act of historical justice, reuniting a continent unnaturally divided by the Cold War.

Simultaneously, 3,000 miles away and all but unnoticed by the rest of the world, another enlargement – that of Nato to embrace Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary – glides softly through the US Congress. Various subcommittees have already given their blessing, almost on the nod, and the full Senate vote to ratify could come within days. And this, as they say, is the big one. Tony Blair has promised a separate vote in the Commons, perhaps before the summer recess. But assuming America gives the lead, do not expect any of the 15 other alliance members to demur. How different is Nato enlargement from EU enlargement: so simple, so quick, and yet of such utterly dubious merit.

Clearly, what is done is done. Having promised at the Madrid summit last July to admit in 1999 the three Visegrad countries, Nato can hardly go back on its word. But if anything the arguments against expansion have gathered strength since. More obviously than ever, the cart has been put before the horse; a decision has been taken to expand an alliance before determining what purpose that alliance serves, now that the threat which brought about its creation no longer exists. Yet the country responsible for that vanished threat still exists. And in a different way it matters as much as ever.

The Soviet Union and the Cold War may be no more. Russia, short of its internal and external empires, may be desperately weak and its military a shambles; in no condition to pose either an economic nor a military threat – in the sense such threats are usually understood – to its neighbours for years, probably decades. In the short term, however, that very weak-

ness brings its own dangers; while in the longer run nothing, not even the eastward expansion of the EU, is more important for us than the forging of a stable, democratic Russia. On both counts, Nato expansion makes matters worse.

Rule one of successful diplomacy is to understand the mind of your opposite number, and do nothing to humiliate him. Crucial to understanding Russia is acceptance of its "defensive paranoia". Tell that to the former "socialist allies" of the old Warsaw Pact, it will be objected; and logically it may be absurd that the largest country on earth, still possessing the largest nuclear arsenal, should be worried by "encirclement". But how easy international relations would be if logic alone guided countries' behaviour.

Russians – at least the powerful nationalist faction, most inimical to the Western notion of democracy – are all too easily convinced everyone else is ganging up on them. Ultimately, the Poles, the Czechs and the Hungarians see membership as protection against a Russian invasion. From its end of the telescope however, Moscow merely sees forward units of the old enemy creeping still closer to its western border. In its present reduced state, Russia has been obliged to accept expansion with as good a grace as it can muster. But deeds, not words, are a better gauge of its feelings.

Despite (or more accurately, because of) its present difficulties, Russia cannot be ignored. Take foreign currency. Russia is always



short of it, and the goods best able to secure it are arms. Hence Moscow's perfectly understandable desire to keep in with past and potential future customers such as Iran and Iraq, whatever the US might think. It does not seem to have dawned on Washington or London that haste on expanding Nato might have bought greater Russian pressure to bear on Saddam Hussein – certainly a more vital concern for the West than a putative security danger for some countries in central Europe, at best many years down the line. Or take Kosovo, where Russian resistance, with a veto in the UN Security Council to back it up, deprives sanctions against Slobodan Milosevic of their sharpest teeth.

Then there is the small matter of nuclear arms control. Arms control, you will say, was not that arcane business rendered irrelevant by the collapse of Communism? Far from it. Because of Nato, the Russian Parliament is refusing to endorse the Start-II treaty that would halve its stockpile of nuclear weapons – in other words halve the number of Russian weapons that might end up in the wrong hands. Because of Nato, Moscow is less likely to ask the US to assist in preventing nuclear proliferation, be it of materials, technology, or the scientists themselves. Such are the consequences of leaving Russia out. There are good reasons for the EU to keep Turkey in the cold, and the price to pay may be small. In the case of Nato and Russia, however, the reasons are threadbare, and the price could be terribly high.

Ashes to ashes and dust to dust – a waking dream in an Irish hospital

Come with John Walsh to his mother's bedside, where strange things are going on. Then sample his views on Quentin Tarantino



The mark of Cain, or just a badge of Irishness?

Photograph: Andrew Buurman

I'VE SPENT the past couple of weeks in an Irish hospital, attending to my stricken mother, and amid the deluge of flowers and holy water shakers, the metallic forest of drips and inhalers, the procession of kindly visitors and beaming nuns, I have found myself nodding off in the afternoon; my head achingly flattened against the side of a clothing cabinet like an exhausted horse going to sleep against the wall of its stall. But even in this somnolent posture, I've had a recurring dream, the same one that invades my nights with a weird filmic clarity. The odd thing about this dream is that, for all its surreal quality, it isn't a construct of the imagination; it happened.

Come back with me two weeks, to a Wednesday morning when, as I sat by her bedside, a male nurse appeared by my side, bearing a little bowl full of ashes. He could have been a sales rep from the offices of Mr Boffin, the dust millionaire in Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend*, but he wasn't. From the bowl he flourished a metal plunger, the kind you might once have seen stamping out library books. "Would she," he enquired of the slumbering figure in the bed, "like some of the ash?" I regarded him coldly. My mother, I pointed out, is seriously ill. She has no immediate need of a *memento mori*, thank you very much. In fact it's pretty tedious...

Without ado, he dunked the plunger into the ashes and stabbed a black cross on my mother's innocent forehead. An Arizona cowpoke branding a heifer would have been more subtle. My jaw dropped. "Now," said the nurse, with a camp little flourish, "Would you like some yourself?" This was a tricky one. Would I like to have my head anointed with graveyard grit by a hospital orderly? Father Jack would have told him to fuck off. "I'll try and get by without it," I wearily replied.

Later I went for a walk down the hospital corridor. A couple of sweet young nurses, barely out of their teens, appeared, their foreheads streaked with ash. From the Male Patients' toilet an elderly amputee emerged, similarly enigmatically. More and more of them appeared. The girls preparing lunch in the kitchen, the visiting relatives having a crafty gap by the window, the tiny children bringing a posy of snowdrops for their poorly Auntie Bridget – all of them bore the same ashy mark of Cain like a nasty prize. Even the divine Ward Sister, pausing for a chat about my mother's progress, had a perfect dusty cross on her brow like the crosshairs on a huge gun. They seemed to be milling together, to be heading towards me. It was like *The Night of the Living Dead*.

I fled, took the lift, rushed to the ground floor café for a dose of normality among the muffins and Lucozade bottles and the non-ill, non-nursing outsiders, the ones who, like me, couldn't get out of a hospital fast enough. And blow me down if they, too, hadn't all been nobbled by the disorderly orderly. Young and old, cool Galway babes and rosary-toting matrons alike, demure local beauties and scraggy itinerants shooting the breeze over their polystyrene cups, were all emblazoned with

QUENTIN TARANTINO – loathe him or ignore him, you can't like him. Or escape him. The most celebrated *wunderkind* of American cinema since Orson Welles is currently featured in every magazine in the known world, and the stars of his new movie *Jackie Brown* have apparently bought squatters' rights on the feature pages of the British press. *Le tout Londres artistique* piled into the National Film Theatre recently to ask respectfully what His Wonderfulness was up to; *Film 98* has cleared the decks for

interviewed in the *Observer*, remarks of his character, the homicidal black gangster-pimp Ordell Robbie: "Quentin said all along he was writing Ordell for me, but he said that he lived with Ordell for so long that he wrestled with the idea of doing it himself." But Tarantino didn't write Ordell at all; Ordell was the creation, lock, stock and barrel, of Elmore Leonard in *Rum Punch*, published five years ago.

4) Because of Tarantino's curious desire to mutate into a black man. "I went to an all-black school," he tells *Total Film* magazine. "It's the culture I identify with." But he identifies with it mainly, it seems, as a way of sharing the culture of racial insult.

Critics are worried about the number of times his black characters use the word "nigger" in *Jackie Brown*, but he's always been over-keen on trans-racial demotic. In *Pulp Fiction*, he plays a (white) friend of the black hitman Jules and gets away with saying things like, "Jules, when you drove in here did you notice a sign out front that said 'Dead Nigger Storage'?" In *True Romance*, which he wrote but didn't direct, you find a white drug dealer, played by Gary Oldman, who speaks in Rasta-man slang – someone with whom Tarantino can idiomatically identify.

5) Because his dialogue isn't as wonderful as he thinks. Here's a sample: "Look, I hate to be the kinda nigga does a nigga a favour then BAM! hits a nigga up for a favour in return. But I'm afraid I gotta be that kinda nigga..." Mr Tarantino tells his admiring public, "I think that in my dialogue there's a music or poetry, and the repetition of certain words helps give it a beat." In your dreams, Quentin.

'Jackie Brown' is dull, prosaic, murky, gauche, meandering, wilfully undramatic, far too long and apparently shot on yellowing film stock

the remembrance of death – because it was, of course, Ash Wednesday, and that's what you do in Ireland at the beginning of Lent, as surely as you wear a spring of shamrock on March 17.

I stood in the tea queue feeling paradoxically in the circumstances like a marked man. In the plague years of the Middle Ages, I mused, weren't they keen on black crosses too? Only in those days, they were daubed on the doors of doomed houses, warning you not to go near them. I seemed to have stumbled into a plague scene in 1998, in which none of the victims is the least bit bothered about their condition. And in this recurring dream of mine, all the victims are turning quizzical expressions towards my pale, un-ashed forehead, and the look on their faces says: You? Why d'you think you're different?

a solo interview; and he appears, paradoxically holding a gun to his scrunched-up features, on the cover of *Signs and Sound*, the last redoubt of sense and taste for the intelligent cineaste. He is, basically, God. So why do I get this burning desire to rush off to Los Angeles and give him a good kicking?

1) Because *Jackie Brown* is dull, prosaic, murky, gauche, meandering, wilfully undramatic, far too long, and apparently shot on yellowing film stock from the Seventies, and I paid \$6.50 to see it.

2) Because everyone is excited about Tarantino's "rediscovery" of the actress Pam Grier, variously described as "the blaxploitation diva" and "the Seventies goddess". Until about a month ago, nobody had actually heard of Ms Grier or seen any of her films.

3) Because Samuel L. Jackson, in-

Don't let the facts get in the way of a good prejudice



PAUL VALLEY

Opinionitis is breaking out all over. But Keats offers a remedy

SO DID John Prescott do it? Do what? Well, if you have to ask that you're on the wrong page. This is Comment, not News. And facts are, after all, nothing more than a preparation for opinion. So did John Prescott do it?

Me, I'm, predisposed to think he didn't. After all, he seems a decent kind of bloke. So if you can offer me any facts which speak to that predisposition, I'm open to them. Otherwise not.

What we need, said Dickens's utilitarian petit-capitalist, Mr Gradgrind, is facts, facts, facts. That was his opinion, at any rate. I'm not so sure he was right. Has the Deputy Prime Minister been mired in the corruption being investigated by

the police in the local council at Hull? Or is it just a vendetta against him launched by disaffected members of Old Labour?

The thing is, that's not the really interesting issue. After all, corruption and vendetta are minority pastimes. But coming to an opinion is something we all do on a daily, if not an hourly, basis – and then we hourly repeat what suits us without bothering to check the basis of the assumption. Nothing new in that, you might say. Most newspapers are built on reinforcing a worldview and conveniently rejecting those bits of reality which do not neatly fit.

Sometimes, of course, blind faith is a good thing. What parent could reject the dying wish of a son about to be hanged.

"Clear my name," said James Hanratty on the eve of his execution. Whatever the doubts DNA evidence has thrown up this week it would be an odd father who did not persist in the 36-year campaign to protest his son's innocence. But the rest of us can now safely slide Hanratty into our portfolios of political prejudices where we please.

Opinionitis requires that we take a stance on a fair number of things in today's news alone. Intensive farming: does the heavy use of nitrates provide cheap food for everyone (farm lobby) or risk poisoning the nation with its residues (consumer watchdog)? Is the notion that passive smoking is bad for you disproved (tobacco industry) or a piece of manipulative

propaganda (health lobby)? Is the beef-on-the-bone ban a sensible precaution (Min of Ag) or an intrusion into personal liberty (butchers and caterers)?

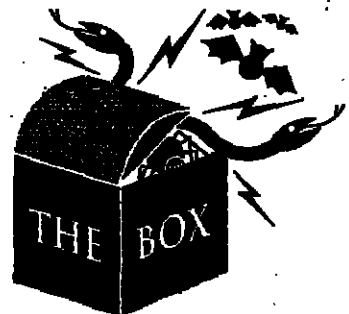
Facts do not help here. Indeed the more we read the more confused we become. Stories of disgusting abattoirs – or of young women dying horrible deaths – from the BSE inquiry load the anecdotal cards against beef in a way that boring old risk analysis never can. Being told that there is only one v-CJD death for every 25 million beefsteaks eaten does not somehow have the same emotional pull.

In the face of all this I am trying hard not to take a view. This is counter-cultural these

days. To some extent it always was. When the Scottish empiricist David Hume went to visit Voltaire and Co in France he returned shocked by their atheism. A philosopher could be, indeed in professional terms had to be, an agnostic, he insisted; to be an atheist is as much a faith statement as to believe in God, in epistemological terms, that is.

But let us not get caught up in such certainty when mild scepticism is an option. Keats had the right idea when he advocated Negative Capability – the condition "when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact or reason". But then, of course, you must feel free to disagree.

KNIGHTSBRIDGE insiders predict that Mohamed al Fayed may once again defy conventionality if the Government refuses to give him a British passport. That is, he may go travelling and take a permanent holiday from the UK. There has already been press speculation about whether he could be tempted to sell Harrods. Surely there would be no lack of interested buyers. But where would al Fayed set up his new home? Paris once appeared to be the logical destination: he owns the Duke of Windsor's house and could keep closer tabs on the Ritz. But that was before the French judge brusquely summoned him to appear in Paris today in order to expand on his conspiracy theories. Last week the *New York Post* speculated that al Fayed might move to the Big Apple. Our sources point out that Mohamed used to own a lease on part of Rockefeller Center and keeps a permanent suite at the Pierre Hotel. His brother



er Ali has just opened a sleek branch of Turnbull & Asser in midtown Manhattan and lives in a sprawling waterfront estate in Connecticut, complete with all the rich man's toys, including a new private yacht and jet. Could Mohamed adjust his Park Lane lifestyle to NYC's rough and tumble, hard-living fast lane? Does a bagel have a hole in the middle?

HERE IS AN IDEA whose time has

definitely arrived: charging PR firms for the press releases they bung through our fax machines. The *Los Angeles Times-Washington Post* news service has announced that it now bins any and all unsolicited PR fax messages. If you wish to avoid this fate, they've established a pay telephone line which charges \$2 for the first minute, \$1 for each additional minute and is connected to a fax machine. Which UK newspaper will be the first to introduce this wonderful innovation?

AS THE FEUD continues between the Rugby Football Union and its member clubs, word has reached Pandora of the ultimate in sporting insults. Cliff Brittle, millionaire chairman of the RFU, is a dapper man who has never made much fuss about his achievements as a rugby player at Stoke on Trent. Now the word circulating around the clubs is that "Brit-

tle was the only player in the history of rugby to comb his hair at half-time".

AN AMERICAN air hostess named Diana Benson has been blabbing on the Internet about the celebrity passengers she served when she worked for the now defunct MGM Grand airlines. Back in the decadent Eighties, opulent MGM Grand was the only way to fly, darling, on the "milk run" from LA to NY and back. Julia Roberts, OJ Simpson, Eddie Murphy: Diana has a tale to tell about them all.

She is particularly rude about Lauren Bacall, accusing her of hogging the caviar and of being keen to receive celebrity homage from the young hostesses. "Do you know who I am? I am Lauren Bacall," the actress is quoted as saying. "The Lauren Bacall. I was married to Humphrey Bogart. The Humphrey Bogart." Oh, that Humphrey Bogart.

WHAT DOES Piers Pottinger look like? Since he became Mohamed al Fayed's replacement for departed Harrods PR fiak Michael Cole, Pottinger has been dodging the news cameras. Whenever the PR man's name appears in print, it carries adjectives like "self-effacing" or "unseen".

Not long ago, *The Times* was forced to ask its readers if they could supply a photograph of Pottinger, who is Sir Tim Bell's partner. Ever willing to oblige, Pandora is happy to share the accompanying snap with anyone who might be interested.



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MPC division sends pound soaring

By Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

THE POUND soared on the foreign exchanges yesterday after the Bank of England revealed that only the casting vote of Eddie George, its Governor, had prevented a rise in interest rates last month.

The Bank's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) was evenly split, four-four, on whether or not the cost of borrowing ought to rise, having voted five-three against a rise in January. Mervyn King, the deputy governor in charge of economics, switched sides in February, forcing the Governor to use his casting vote.

Minutes of last week's MPC meeting will not be published until April, but as the Bank took no action, the committee almost certainly remained split.

The news sent the pound more than two pence higher to DM3.02, while the sterling index against a range of currencies climbed 0.5 to 106.1. This was its highest since last July.

Some analysts stuck to the view that there would turn out to be no need for a further interest rate increase. Figures this week showing manufacturing output in the doldrums lent support to their view that the economy is slowing fast enough to keep inflation on target.

The Engineering Employers' Federation, publishing its Budget submission yesterday, pleaded for a halt to the policy tightening. It said that rates did not need to climb any further, adding: "Economic management should... endeavour as far

as possible to reverse the rise in the pound."

But other economists said the very fact that the Bank was delaying a necessary increase was to blame for the jump in the exchange rate. "They have impaled themselves on the fence," said Paul Mortimer-Lee, chief economist at Paribas. "The continued expectation of a policy tightening is what is keeping the pound strong."

The minutes published yesterday suggested that the two camps on the committee had moved further apart last month. Each side put forward several arguments in favour of their preferred course of action.

The hawks - Alan Budd, Willem Buiter and Charles Goodhart, along with Mr King - said domestically generated



Changing sides: Mervyn King joined the hawks

inflation was running too high for the 2.5 per cent inflation target to be hit once the one-off effect of the strong pound on import prices had worn off.

They also emphasised the risk of accelerating pay growth, and pointed out that the Bank's "Inflation Report" had shown the underlying inflation measure climbing above its target by late next year.

"Failing to raise interest rates at a time when the central projection of inflation two years ahead was above target would risk damaging the credibility of the MPC process," the minutes report them arguing.

On the other hand, the doves - Mr George, David Clementi, DeAnne Julius and Ian Plenderleith - said there were clear signs growth had begun to slow. In addition, the economic picture was too uncertain to justify an immediate increase. It would be better to wait and see what happened over the next few months.

They too had an argument based on credibility - that it would be damaged if a rate rise now had to be reversed before long because of a sharper than expected downturn.

But one factor that did boost the MPC's credibility was the fact that the internal Bank members had not all voted together. Although both Mr George and Mr King had earlier given firm assurances that the four Bank executives did not vote as a block, February's split was the first demonstration of this independent-mindedness.

Outlook, page 25



THE MAYFLOWER TEAM, led by chief executive John Simpson (far right), who yesterday sold the seatbelt webbing business, Ribbons of South Wales, to a management buy-out for £6.5m. Mayflower has decided to concentrate on its main businesses. Ribbons has developed a new high-performance seat belt webbing called Autoflex, which is already being used by Ford in the latest Mondeo models. The product has also attracted interest from German car manufacturers.

The management team, led by managing director Godfrey Codrington, technical director Wayne Morse and finance director David Edwards, are investing a 'significant' stake. Venture capital group Gresham Trust and Royal Bank of Scotland are providing the rest. Ribbons is expected to grow quickly in the next five years driven by Autoflex, new seatbelt regulations and strong demand in eastern Europe. The company also plans to expand its range of different seatbelt colours.

Compass replaces Dixons in FTSE reshuffle

By Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

COMPASS, the fast-growing catering group was promoted to the FTSE-100 index of leading shares yesterday after the quarterly meeting of the FTSE Actuaries committee.

Compass replaces electrical retailer Dixons Group, which drops out after falling to be ranked Britain's 121st largest-listed company by market value as at the close on 10 March.

The company will officially start trading as a blue chip stock on 23 March.

Misys, the computer software company, had been tipped for inclusion but missed out by one place.

Misys, which is the 92nd-largest group, remains on the reserve list for inclusion in the FTSE 100 at the next quarterly review on June 10. The others are TI Group, the engineer, Northern Rock, the demutualised building society, Southern Electric Plc, the utility, Provident Financial, the credit group and RMC Group, the building materials company.

Among changes to the FTSE 250 index of next-tier companies, Body Shop International, whose shares are close to a five-year low, was excluded.

In the FTSE 250 and FTSE 350, Yule Catto & Co, FT Group, More Group, WS Atkins Group, Shire Pharmaceuticals, Parity and Merchants Trust are all included. The Committee also approved the inclusion of the new issues Monsoon and

Cortec PLC in the FTSE SmallCap & FTSE All-share with effect from 23 March 1998.

The Misys, which provides computer software to banks and insurance companies and was only founded nine years ago, now lies just outside the top 100 and just missed out on becoming the first information technology to join the blue chip list.

The changes in membership of the FTSE-100, or Footsie as it is known among the City fraternity, reflect the shifting patterns in the UK economy.

The overwhelming trend is a shift towards fast growing and often youthful services companies and away from the declining traditional manufacturing groups which were such powerful stock market performers in the mid-1980s.

Listings to die for, page 18
Outlook, page 25

Brussels set to bless BA-American deal

By Michael Harrison in London
and Katherine Burder
in Brussels

THE EUROPEAN Commission is set to approve the long-awaited transatlantic alliance between British Airways and American Airlines in the next two weeks, paving the way for a new open skies agreement between the UK and the US.

Karel Van Miert, the EU Competition Commissioner, is

The consumer products giant Unilever yesterday said it would seek an immediate suspension of a EC ruling outlawing its refusal to allow other ice-cream makers to share its freezer cabinets. The ruling applies only to Unilever's Irish subsidiary HB Ice Cream and follows a seven-year battle by the US foods group Mars to permit shopkeepers to stock its products in Unilever cabinets. The Commission said Unilever was abusing its dominant position in Ireland, where it supplied more than 85 per cent of ice cream.

expected to brief the Council of Ministers on the conditions he has laid down for allowing the deal to proceed at a meeting next Wednesday. The Commission is expected to give its formal approval at a meeting a week later on 23 March.

Clearance for the BA-AA

tie-up will allow London and Washington to complete negotiations on an agreement to liberalise transatlantic air services, even though Brussels ruled yesterday that such bilateral deals contravene EU law.

The Commission sent a "reasoned opinion" to eight member states, including Britain, saying that the bilateral agreements infringed EU law. The member states have two months to respond, after which Neil Kinnock, the EU Transport Commissioner, is likely to take them to the European Court of Justice. The other member states are Germany, Sweden, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland and Luxembourg.

Mr Kinnock has been seeking wider powers to negotiate EU-wide agreements with the US, arguing that the present bilateral deals give US carriers access to national markets in Europe without allowing European carriers equal access to the domestic American market.

A spokesman for the UK government last night rejected the EU's ruling, saying: "We are confident we are legally entitled to negotiate bilaterally with the US and we are continuing with those negotiations."

Although no formal talks have been held for almost a year now, informal discussions between officials have taken place in the US in the last few weeks.

Outlook, page 25

BAT warns of threat to £225bn US tobacco settlement

By Andrew Yates

BAT, the cigarette and financial services giant, yesterday warned that the American tobacco industry's \$370bn (£225bn) compensation settlement was in danger of collapse.

The deal only had a 50-50 chance of being adopted by the US Congress, it said.

Martin Broughton, BAT's chief executive, cautioned that if Congress failed to adopt the proposals by November, when elections are

due to take place, the "momentum" of the current discussions would be lost, potentially derailing the chances of an agreement for ever.

Mr Broughton also hinted that BAT would walk away from the deal if Congress tried to impose stiffer financial penalties on the industry. "We see no need, or much scope for flexibility," he said.

If the deal goes ahead BAT will put aside \$1.7bn this year as part of a \$10bn up front settlement for the in-

dustry, and will pay billions of pounds over the next 25 years funded by a sharp rise in cigarette prices.

BAT chose No Smoking Day to announce a 28 per cent fall in profits to £1.8bn during 1997. The figures were marred by almost \$800m of exceptional costs including a £258m provision to cover tobacco legal settlements in the US.

The group was also forced to put aside \$85m at Allied Dunbar for the pension mis-selling scandal,

bringing its total provision to £197m.

The plan to split off its financial services arm to form a new company with Zurich, the Swiss insurance group, this autumn will cost £266m, about £40m more than expected due to the cost of restructuring the groups debts and mounting advisers fees.

The strength of sterling knocked another £154m off profits. BAT's tobacco profits were also hit by the financial crisis in Asia which caused profits to slump to

£309m (£356m). Demand for cigarettes in the region remains subdued.

The results disappointed the market, sending the shares down 20p to 631p and wiping more than £626m off its market value.

BAT is continuing a strategic review of its Eagle Star insurance business where it has already cut 1,000 staff last year. Parts of the operation may now be sold, although BAT said it would not dispose of the whole business.

Fosters placed in administration after banks withdraw support

By Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

FOSTERS Trading Company, the menswear retailer which was founded in 1876, was placed in administration yesterday after its bankers said they were no longer able to provide adequate financial support.

The collapse threatens 1,700 jobs and it seems certain that will be closures among the group's 175 high street outlets. The company blamed the trend towards sportswear and branded goods which have affected sales of its denim and casual-wear ranges. A disappointing Christmas and a deteriorating

market persuaded the bank to call for a review of operations. The directors then applied for an administration order.

Fosters has significant debts of £2.1m on sales of £95m. The company was formed from a management buy-out from Sears in 1992. It was led by managing director David Carter Johnson.

BDO Stoy Hayward has been appointed administrators. They are planning a rationalisation programme and a three-month review. David Gilbert, a partner at BDO, said: "We are optimistic that our proposals will help transform the business."

Cruickshank urges telecoms overhaul

By Peter Thal Larsen

Don Cruickshank, the telecoms regulator, yesterday called for a fundamental overhaul of the communications industry which would involve abandoning the Telecommunications and Broadcasting Acts and replacing them with a broader set of general rules.

In a speech delivered to an audience of telecoms specialists, Mr Cruickshank pointed out the rapid convergence of telecoms, media and information technology and argued they would have to be regulated very differently in future if the UK was to keep its leading position in the telecom and creative industries.

He suggested that individual broadcast and telecoms licenses should be replaced by a system of "general authorisation" where companies would be allowed to operate unhindered provided it adhered to a set of special rules.

He also argued that the system which requires ITV and Channel 5 to provide a certain amount of public service broadcasting was "rapidly becoming unenforceable" and should be dropped so that the channels could "compete on a level playing field with other commercial players".

Meanwhile, he said the licence fee should be linked to the costs of making programmes so that the BBC could

continue to hold its own against the commercial broadcasters.

It is the first time that Mr Cruickshank, who steps down as director-general of Ofcom at the end of the month, has publicly outlined his views on the regulation of the rapidly changing communications industry.

The speech, which is effectively Mr Cruickshank's swansong, will fuel the debate about whether Ofcom, which is charged with regulating the telecom industry, should be merged with the Independent Television Commission, which controls broadcasting standards, to create a super-regulator. Although Mr Cruickshank refused to address the issue specifically, he is due to submit evidence on the

subject to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee next week.

In the past, Mr Cruickshank has argued that the regulation of broadcasting "content" and the means in which that content is delivered should be separated. However, he appears to have changed his mind.

"The present regulatory structure is creaking, with overlaps between regulators and rules which don't quite map on to the new communications world," Mr Cruickshank said.

He warned that a failure to simplify the structure would scare off investors and hamper the growth of new industries. "The one option we can't take is to let things drift," he said.

STOCK MARKETS

Index	Close	Change	Change (%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield (%)
FTSE 100	5829.80	1.30	0.02	5858.10	4189.10	3.31
FTSE 250	5316.50	30.00	0.57	5289.50	4384.20	3.03
FTSE 350	2282.10	3.40	0.15	2298.40	2075.70	3.26
FTSE All Share	2719.58	3.95	0.15	2724.47	2366.07	3.24
FTSE SmallCap	2523.40	12.40	0.49	2511.00	2182.10	2.90
FTSE RealIndex	1375.40	5.60	0.41	1389.80	1225.20	3.28
FTSE AIM	1017.50	1.70	0.17	1135.50	955.90	1.03
Dow Jones	8670.77	28.90	0.33	8690.10	6366.78	1.67
Nikkei	16758.14	-228.68	-1.34	20910.79	14488.21	0.92
Hang Seng	11118.95	220.28	2.00	18920.51	7905.13	3.45
Dax	4832.76	-1.67	-0.04	4838.69	3182.33	1.66

INTEREST RATES

Instrument	3 months	6 months	1 year	1 1/2 years	2 years	3 years	5 years	10 years
UK 7.5%	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.30
US 5.5%	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13
Japan 0.7%	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22
Germany 5.5%	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25

Instrument	Price	Yield	Change
Indep Insurance	1517.50	122.50	8.76
Warrenburg	328.50	25.00	8.29
Securitas	383.50	27.00	7.67
Wilson Bowden	659.00	45.50	7.42

CURRENCIES

Currency	at 5pm	Change	1 yr Ago
Dollar	1.6471	+1.05p	1.6057
DM	3.0216	+2.70p	2.7346
Yen	212.85	+25.65	195.80
S Index	108.10	+0.70	97.90

Currency	at 5pm	Change	1 yr Ago
Swedish	0.6071	-0.35p	0.6228
D-Mark	1.8342	+0.80p	1.7027
Yen	129.26	+11.44	121.85
S Index	108.30	+0.40	104.00

Currency	at 5pm	Change	1 yr Ago
Brent Oil (\$)	12.49	0.21	18.00
Gold (\$)	294.55	-1.25	363.55
Silver (\$)	8.31	0.20	8.25

Instrument	Price	Yield	Change
11 Group	511.00	34.00	-8.24
Barclays	481.50	28.50	-5.50
Abn-Amro	166.00	-7.50	-4.32

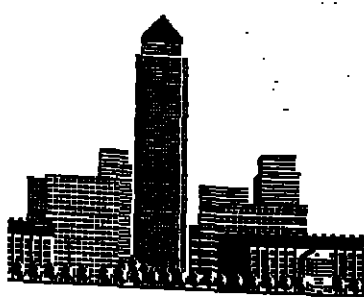
TOURIST RATES

Country	Rate
Australia (dollars)	2.3744
Austria (schillings)	20.49
Belgium (francs)	60.19
Canada (\$)	2.2545
Cyprus (pounds)	0.8504
Denmark (kroner)	11.20
Finland (markka)	6.9248
France (francs)	9.7786
Germany (marks)	2.9268
Greece (drachme)	462.06
Hong Kong (\$)	12.31
Ireland (pence)	1.1735
Italy (lira)	2.887
Japan (yen)	208.07
Malta (lira)	0.6311
Netherlands (guilders)	3.2878
Norway (kroner)	12.19
Portugal (escudos)	206.93
Spain (pesetas)	246.65
South Africa (rand)	7.8230
Sweden (kroner)	12.82
Switzerland (francs)	2.3857
Turkey (lira)	370.771
USA (\$)	1.608

Source: Thomas Cook
Rates for indication purposes only

الحل من الامم

Complete
replace
Dixons
in FTSE
reshuffle



OUTLOOK ON THE SPLIT OVER INTEREST RATES, DANGERS IN THE FOOTIE AND WHY KINNOCK'S THREATS WILL COME TO NOUGHT

Why not get it over with; raise interest rates

ALL creatures with feathers are equal, but some are more equal than others. Eddie George's casting vote on behalf of the Bank of England's doves meant the hawks lost the argument in February, and presumably in March as well, even though Mervyn King, the highly respected deputy governor, flew over to the other side.

To close followers of Mr King's work during his years as the Bank's chief economist, and now deputy governor designate, the surprise was that he had ever found himself on the dovish side of the argument in the first place. He was the architect of inflation targeting and has as good a claim as any individual to the success of inflation policy over the past five years. If his economics team at the Bank - which has been erring on the optimistic side in its forecasts - predicted inflation rising above target within two years, he could always be expected to favour higher interest rates.

Mr King, and a majority of the professional economists on the committee, see the inflation target as their overriding priority. The bankers - joined by DeAnne Julius, an economist from business - are giving more weight to other factors, like the pain being suffered by industry as the manufacturing sector grinds to a halt.

This is a judgement on which commentators are just as divided as the MPC, and it is a genuinely difficult call because the economy is so self evidently past its peak. Undoubtedly the economy is cooling. The question is how fast it is slowing, which is much more difficult to answer than

whether it is slowing.

It is an open secret around Whitehall that one outsider, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, wishes the Bank would raise rates one more time and get it over with, rather than prolonging the uncertainty. A quarter point increase would do little direct harm to businesses or homebuyers and might do a lot of indirect good if it succeeded in persuading the financial markets that UK rates would climb no further.

As things stand, the MPC's flock of dithering doves is making it harder for the Chancellor to justify his claim that the days of boom and bust are decisively over. Our gentle feathered friends in Threadneedle Street would still rather take long-term risks with inflation than risk short-term unpopularity with manufacturers.

The problem with the FTSE 100

THE ELEVATION of Compass, the contract catering group, to the FTSE100, is a better choice of constituent than another bank, but the fact remains that the index has become a curiously unrepresentative and quite dangerous yardstick of stock market behaviour and activity. Banking and other financial services already account for more than 30 per cent of the index, and with Northern Rock hovering on the brink of inclusion, that looks destined to rise even further.

Pharmaceuticals account for another 12.5 per cent of the index. What with all

that consolidation, privatisation and conversion, the Top 100 have come to represent more than three-quarters of the value of the entire stock market. In itself, this is indicative of a worrying imbalance in the UK economy. One of Britain's biggest economic weaknesses is that though it has its fair share of leading world class companies, it is deficient in small to medium sized enterprise. There can be no more graphic illustration of this failing than the FTSE 100. The size of the index and the dominance of just two sectors is also distorting investment patterns.

As a result, the time may have come for FTSE International, which runs these things, to have a bit of a rethink and look at ways of modifying the monster they have created. In spite of a recent return to form by the mid-caps, the gap between the Premier division of companies and the rest continues to widen. With so many tracker funds now in operation, promotion to the blue-chip ranks now provides a rocket boost not all the constituents deserve. Conversely, relegation is an ever more painful experience - worse even than a Premier League football club losing all that Sky TV money when they plunge into Nationwide obscurity.

The whole thing is in any case turning into a self-perpetuating spiral. Since Footsie performs better than the market as a whole, more and more investors are turning from active fund management to FTSE 100 trackers. As a consequence more and more money gets pushed into the FTSE. This is not mere intellectual con-

jecture. There's plenty of evidence of it. We may even be witnessing an investment bubble in the making.

FTSE International says the index was set up to represent the largest companies. The index therefore simply reflects what is going on in the real economy. Industries that are consolidating, like banks and pharmaceuticals, become more significant constituents, while others that are following the demerger trend, like conglomerates and retailers, drop out.

All the same, there is plainly cause for concern here. The boffin fund managers, brokers and actuarial consultants who make up the indices committee should put some wet towels on their heads and do some thinking.

Hot air over open skies

THE EUROPEAN Transport Commissioner, Neil Kinnock, has been engaged in a dogfight with member states for the last three years over their right to sign bilateral "open skies" agreements with the US governing transatlantic air services.

The Commission believes that Europe gives too much away and gets too little in return each time one of these deals is agreed. Overly dominant US carriers get yet more access to Europe while their own skies, the biggest single aviation market in the world, remain closed to European carriers.

Let us negotiate European Union-wide agreements on behalf of all member

states and we will fly back from the US with a much better deal, goes the Kinnock argument.

A growing number of member states do not agree. They regard decisions about who may take-off and land from their hub airports - a highly lucrative right - as the province of national governments. Mr Kinnock retorts that since Europe is now a single aviation market it should negotiate as one.

The reality, however, is that it remains a market carved up by flag carrying airlines from each member state, all of whom guard their territory fiercely. Side by side with each new open skies bilateral comes an alliance pact between the relevant European flag carrier and one of the big US airlines.

Mr Kinnock has now run out of patience and has sent a "reasoned" opinion to the UK and seven other member states ruling that such agreements infringe EU law. The member states have two months to study the ruling before Mr Kinnock drags them off to the European Court of Justice.

Unfortunately, both he and they know that it will take at least three years before the court delivers its verdict, by which time the horse will almost certainly have bolted. The UK, for instance, is on the point of signing an open skies pact with the US which is tied to approval of the British Airways-American Airlines alliance. This will allow five more US carriers into Heathrow but only one new UK carrier across the Atlantic. Mr Kinnock knows he is running out of time. He's making a lot of noise but probably to not much effect.

IMF performs U-turn over Indonesian currency board

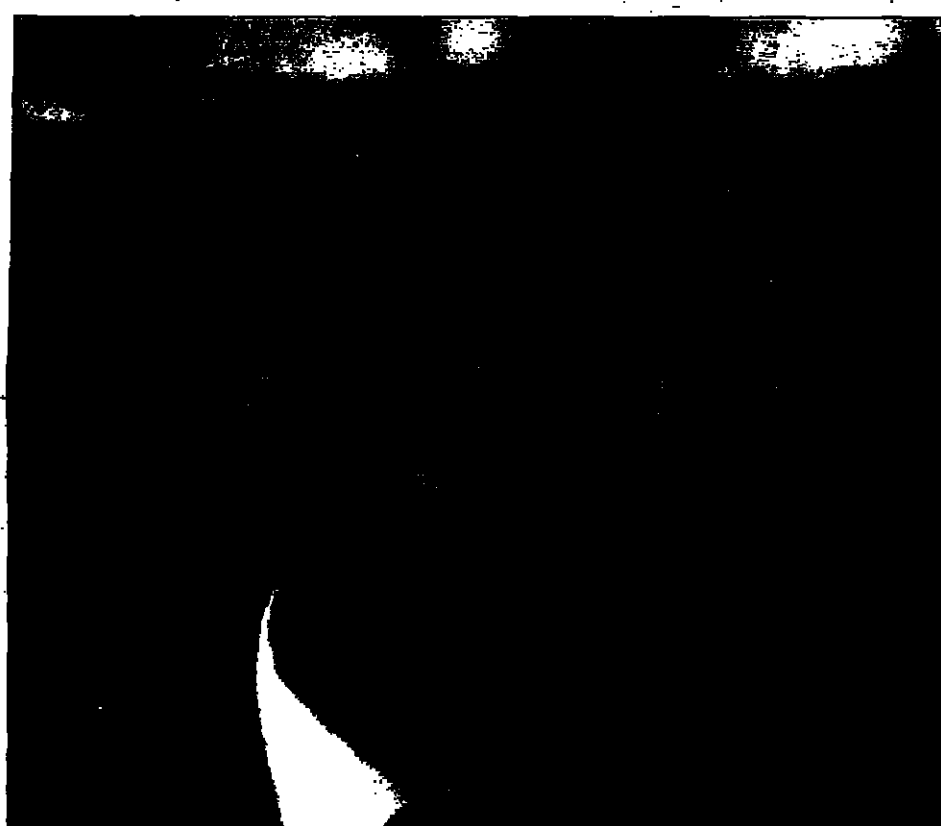
By Mary Dejevsky
Washington

THE INTERNATIONAL Monetary Fund (IMF) has effected a sharp policy U-turn over Indonesia, softening its conditions for providing aid and lifting objections to the formation of a currency board that would peg the Indonesian rupiah to the US dollar. The policy change emerged from remarks by Stanley Fischer, the IMF's deputy managing director, just hours after President Suharto had been elected for a seventh five-year term amid continuing unrest in Indonesia.

"There is reason for flexibility," Mr Fischer told a news conference in Washington, stressing that the IMF was "mindful of the potential tragic consequences of events taking place in Indonesia" and the "major humanitarian problems that could be arising there". He said that a currency board could work, perhaps in six months' time "if the right conditions are met".

Mr Fischer's remarks appeared to pave the way for the IMF to reverse its decision to delay the next tranche of aid for Indonesia. It had announced only last week that a \$3bn (£1.81bn) payment initially scheduled for mid-March would be delayed at least until April.

The shift in policy could not have been made without the endorsement of the US Treasury, which is the main contributor to the IMF and has led calls for thorough economic reforms in Indonesia as a condition for



President Suharto's plans to peg the rupiah have been backed by an US economist

international aid. The content and tone of Mr Fischer's remarks contrasted with the fierce warnings against stubbornness and backsliding that have emanated from Washington in recent weeks.

Mr Fischer's remarks also defused a very embarrassing disagreement between a body of opinion that included the US administration and the IMF, and one of Washington's main South-east Asian allies and a

senior US academic economist who is retained by President Suharto as economic adviser. The economist, Steve Hanke from Johns Hopkins University, strongly supported the formation of a currency board as a means of stabilising the Indonesian currency and energetically argued his view in the US media.

The IMF had objected to the proposal from the time it was first proposed by President

Suharto a month ago, saying that Indonesia was not yet ready for a rigid currency regime.

The rupiah rose on international currency markets yesterday following the more conciliatory tone from the IMF. A high-level Indonesian economic delegation is expected in Washington shortly to discuss international assistance with IMF and US officials.

Schroders tries to play down bid rumours

By Les Paterson

SCHRODERS, one of the few remaining independent UK investment banks, yesterday tried to play down the takeover speculation that has swirled around the stock in recent months.

Speaking at the presentation of the group's annual results, Win Bischoff, Schroders' chairman, said: "This business suits us very well. We think we can go forward under the same independent ownership. We don't believe we need to merge with anyone, either in investment banking or asset management."

Mr Bischoff said the bank had received no formal take-

over offers. However, he did hint at informal offers, saying: "People talk to us and tell us how wonderful our business is - which, I suppose, is an implied approach."

The bank also made attempts to counter recent criticism of its fund management arm. David Salisbury, head of asset management, said: "We do not believe we are losing market share." He added Schroders had maintained its position as the leading UK fund manager.

On Tuesday, the Combined Actuarial Performance Services (CAPS), which analyses performance in the fund management industry, criticised

the big four fund managers - Schroders, Gartmore, PDM and MAM - for underperformance during 1997. Taken together, the four firms produced returns of 14.9 per cent, compared with the industry average for discretionary funds of 15.6 per cent.

Schroders unveiled pre-tax profits for the year to December of £245m, an increase of just 3 per cent. Before Asian provisions, however, pre-tax profits were £277m, an increase of 16 per cent.

The bank posted Asian provisions of £32m, of which £24m represented provisions against exposure on banking and trading books. Schroders said it had

been "very prudent" and hoped that it would not have to make further provisions.

The remaining Asian provisions - totalling £8m - represented the costs incurred when Schroders rescaled its Asian businesses earlier this year, a move which cost 220 employees their jobs.

Peter Sedgwick, deputy chairman and head of investment banking, said he did not anticipate any further restructuring of Asian investment banking. He said: "We felt we should take one look and take one hard hit."

Schroders' shares finished the day down 63p at 2332p. Investment column, page 26

Rentokil on alert for an acquisition

By Andrew Yates

RENTOKIL, the business services group, yesterday said that it was on the look-out for a substantial acquisition after once again reaching its target of 20 per cent earnings and profits growth in 1997.

Sir Clive Thompson, the group's chief executive said: "Now the acquisition of BET has been integrated we have the management

management capacity to consider other opportunities. We also have the finances, generating £30m of cash per annum which means we will be paying off our debts within two years."

Analysis believe that Rentokil has ISS, the Scandinavian services group, in its sights. Rentokil is also believed to have run a slide rule over Compass, the catering group. However the recent rise in its share price, which saw the group burst into the FTSE 100 yesterday, makes an imminent bid increasingly unlikely.

Sir Clive said he has more than £400m to spend and was interested in expanding Rentokil's hygiene, personnel and property services divisions through acquisitions in North America and Europe.

The economic turmoil in Asia took its toll on Rentokil's business in the region, causing profits to slip by 0.6 per cent to £56.9m, and the group is now unlikely to seek acquisitions in the area.

Asked if Rentokil can sustain the 20 per cent growth rate that has been the hallmark of its performance over the last 16 years, Sir Clive said: "I believe we can beat this target for the next three or four years at least. If we can't, it will not be for want of trying."

Rentokil announced a 31 per cent rise in profits to £417m despite the impact of the strong pound. The company also said it would pay a full-year dividend of 3.06p, up from 2.53p in 1996. Nevertheless the results disappointed the market and the shares slipped 5p to 308p.

Investment column, page 26

Watchdog looks out for millennium bug

By Les Paterson

THE NEW financial services watchdog will today warn member firms that failure to prepare for the year 2000 could lead to their licences being revoked.

Michael Foot, recently appointed as head of financial supervision at the Financial Services Authority (FSA), will tell a conference on Best Practice for Financial Institutions that the job of the FSA is to "protect investors from losses caused by inadequate preparation for the year 2000".

However, Mr Foot will add that the FSA is not there to "solve other people's IT problems". He will say: "The buck must stop with the boards, the chief executives, top management generally, and those running small organisations.... Senior executives need to accept and take very seriously their responsibility."

The FSA will require member firms to give it regular reports on their progress towards year 2000 compliance. If a

member firm's progress is not up to scratch, the watchdog will, in the first instance, require an independent body to assess the firm's compliance status.

If the problem is serious, the FSA will then take further steps to ensure that neither investors, nor the integrity of the markets, are put at risk. Mr Foot will tell the conference: "If we are satisfied that stronger action is justified to achieve our regulatory objectives... the FSA has powers available to it, for example to restrict a firm's activity to take on business, to stop doing business altogether or to transfer its business to another firm."

Mr Foot will also caution firms which believe they are year 2000 compliant against overconfidence. "Such firms should adopt a watching brief and be prepared to revisit their plans."

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THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY ANDREW YATES

Rentokil stays on its 20% target

SO "Mr 20 per cent" has done it again. Clive Thompson, chief executive of Rentokil Initial, has managed to achieve yet another year of 20 per cent growth in profits and earnings per share. That sort of increase has seen the group expand from a company worth just £150m to one approaching £9bn over the last 16 years.

With this sort of track record, it is perhaps hard to criticise the group's prospects. However, the problem with setting such a demanding target is that everybody is waiting for you to fail and a number of City analysts harbour doubts that Rentokil can keep it up.

While that in itself is nothing new, Rentokil did only just reach its self-imposed earnings target last year and without the use of tax losses it inherited from its acquisition of BET in 1996 it would probably have missed its goal.

Rentokil's existing businesses that were not merged with any of BET's operations continued to show double-digit sales growth. However, like-for-like sales at those that were joined together fell 5 per cent.

Rentokil believes there is much scope for improvement and that sales growth should still show double-digit figures this year. A rise in margins, as Rentokil says BET profits up to its own historic high levels, should allow the group to achieve an organic rise in earnings of, say, 15 per cent. Add in the benefits of a likely stream of bolt-on acquisitions and Sir Clive believes the 20 per cent target is in reach this year and for several years to come.

However, the feeling persists that Rentokil needs another big acquisition, and soon, to ensure its share price continues to rise. After all, even Rentokil is ready to admit that no company can grow on its own at 20 per cent for ever.

Rentokil is certainly out there looking for another large purchase. ISS, the Scandinavian cleaning group, Compass the caterer and Securicor have all been mentioned. If it can find the right deal, its share price could motor again. The danger is that the search could overshadow its operating performance.

Rentokil's profits rose 31 per cent to £417m. However, analysts had expected a bit more, underestimating the damaging impact of sterling, and the shares slipped 5p to 308p.

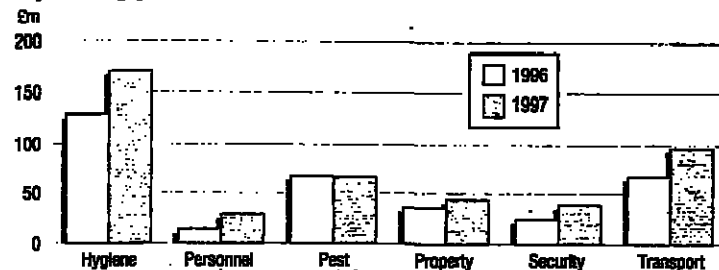
Greig Middleton forecasts current-year profits of around £505m, putting the shares on a prospective price-earnings ratio of 25. Rentokil should hold

Rentokil Initial: At a glance

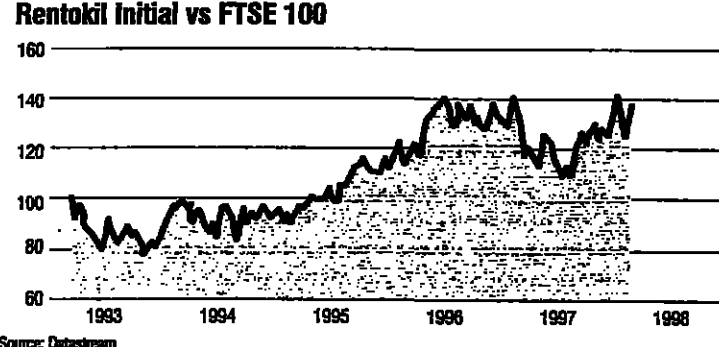
Market value: £8.8bn, share price 308p (-5p)

Five-year record	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Turnover (£bn)	0.59	0.72	0.86	2.34	2.87
Pre-tax profits (£m)	147	177	216	295	497
Earnings per share (p)	4.9	5.9	7.1	8.6	10.3
Dividends per share (p)	1.43	1.73	2.10	2.58	3.08

Operating profit



Rentokil Initial vs FTSE 100



Source: Datastream

on to its premium rating but, until it can pull off another bid deal, the niggling doubts will remain, which are likely to limit the progress of its shares. Hold.

Aegis finds itself a prime position

IN just a few years, media buying has gone from being the dull bit of advertising to a growth industry in its own right. Crispin Davis, the chief executive of Aegis, is fond of pointing out that whereas 20 years ago an advertiser could reach 30 per cent of the population by placing an ad in *Coronation Street*, matters are now more complex.

Faced with a proliferation of media outlets – an explosion of television channels, a growing number of magazines, not to mention the internet –

planning and placing a media campaign has become an important skill.

Compared to the global advertising and media giants, though, media buying is still a fairly small industry. Aegis is the world's third-largest player, yet is capitalised at just £589m. So it has some way to go before it carries as much clout as the companies it buys from.

Mr Davis, however, insists that there is no virtue in becoming large for the sake of it. Rather, his emphasis is on offering value-added services – basically providing research and data to help companies choose the best place for their advertising. That strategy is already working: gross margins last year improved from 5.2 to 5.6 per cent, and have further to go.

Currencies and exceptional items clouded Aegis's 1997 results, but strip those out and profits rose by 28 per cent on a 21 per cent rise in turnover. Helped by new business wins, bolt-on acquisitions and a market forecast to

grow by 7 per cent, this year should offer more of the same. A deal with Zenith, the media buying business jointly owned by Saatchi & Saatchi and Cordiant, could happen but Aegis certainly doesn't need it.

In a sector where much of the talk of growth prospects is hype, Aegis is churning out consistent growth. Panmure Gordon, the stockbroker, forecasts profits of £49.5m which puts the shares, down 0.5p yesterday at 71.5p, on a forward price ratio of 20. Good value.

Bid hopes buoy up Schroders

THREE themes have cropped up over and over during this year's banking season – the Asian crisis, lacklustre investment banking and consolidation prospects. And Schroders, one of the few remaining independent UK merchant banks, yesterday proved to be no exception to the rule.

Schroders announced a 3 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £245m for the year to December. It posted Asian provisions to the tune of £32m – more than expected. On the investment banking side, profits were slightly down on last year. And, as far as mergers go, the bank repeated its commitment to an independent future.

So if Schroders' results don't mark it out from the banking crowd, why is it running at a forward price ratio of more than 20 – high even for pricey financial stocks?

Firstly, although the investment banking business is hardly going great guns, it has not – unlike some – been a disaster. Second, investment banking accounts for less than half of Schroders' profits. The remainder comes from its burgeoning fund management business. This had a good year last year and looks set for more of the same.

Thirdly, the share price is buoyed up by consolidation hopes. Many sector watchers believe that, irrespective of Schroders' public position, it is only a matter of time before it succumbs. And finally, many of the shares are held by the Schroders' family and the bank's employees. So institutions are typically keen to get their hands on the stock – even at today's heady prices.

The shares closed down 3p at 2332p, due to a mixture of profit taking and the Asian provisions. The consolidation hopes and the illiquidity of the stock means the bull run on Schroders' shares may not be at its end. The just yet, although those in for the longer term would do better to look elsewhere.

TI ready for £600m war chest spree

TI GROUP, the engineering company, yesterday said it was prepared to spend its £600m war chest on bolt-on buys and was already in talks with three of 12 potential targets.

Sir Christopher Lewinton, TI chairman, said: "There are 12 acquisition opportunities. It takes a lot of time to persuade them to be a willing seller ... at the right price. We are in discussions with three of them."

The move comes at a time when some industry analysts fear TI's core businesses may be running out of steam and in need of a big deal to stoke up profitability.

TI chiefs spelt out their acquisition strategy after reporting underlying pre-tax profits of £220.6m for 1997, at the lower-end of expectations and down from £232.2m in 1996.

Despite the group's expansion plans and reports that 1998 trading had started well – the order book was up 10-15 per cent on 1997 – traders remained unimpressed. TI's share price fell sharply, to close at 511p, down 34p.

Michael Angle, TI finance director, said proceeds from

recent disposals would put the group in a good position to fund deals. "We will be cash positive and with debt we could spend up to £600m," he said.

The main focus for acquisitions will be in TI Group's Bundy unit, which makes fluid carrying systems for cars and refrigerators and John Crane, the sealing systems-maker.

Industry analysts recently speculated on a major spending spree to shore up the group's flagging share price performance, which hit a two-year low of 430p in January after falling from a peak of 690.5p last October.

Nick Cunningham, the Salomon Smith Barney analyst, said in a recent analysis that the group could afford to spend up to £700m on a deal. "Invested in acquisitions this could add more than 20 per cent to a full year's earnings ... but finding acquisitions will not be easy," he said.

TI bosses said most of their deals will be bolt-on buys to enhance current operations but added that they would not rule out a deal as big as £400m. The 1997 results themselves

held no surprises for analysts. Sales rose 6 per cent to £1.87bn and the total dividend was up 10 per cent to 15.9p per share.

The group said its exposure to the continued strength of sterling had a "significant effect" on the translation of results but not on currency transactions because the group has manufacturing operations across the world.

On the fall-out from the economic turbulence in Asia, TI said there was no material effect on results. At present 10 per cent of its sales come from the Asia-Pacific region, but interests are focused in the relatively stable economies of China, India and Japan as well as the more volatile Korea.

Summing up the divisional performance, TI said the John Crane unit had performed well in tough markets. Bundy shone in the automotive market which was buoyant in the United States, but witnessed volatility elsewhere.

The Dowty divisions "continued to benefit from strong growth in aerospace markets", the company said.

Parkland's former chief serves £600,000 writ

By Michael Harrison

THE FORMER executive chairman of Parkland, the Yorkshire-based textiles group, yesterday served a writ against the company claiming £600,000 damages after being ousted from the job in a boardroom coup in January.

Bryan Lodder is suing Parkland for breach of contract. He was on a two-year contract worth £304,000 a year. He is also seeking to retain share options in the company.

Mr Lodder was asked to resign as chairman and chief executive five days after the group had reported disappointing half-year results. The group turned in a loss of £3.7m after exceptional items, large-

ly restructuring costs which followed a £10m investment in a new high-technology dyeing and finishing plant in Nottingham.

When Mr Lodder took over as chief executive the company was losing more than £3m a year. He subsequently turned it around into profits of more than £3m a year until this year's setback.

The board claimed that he had been asked to resign because "his plans for the future were unrealistic and we lost confidence in him".

However, since his departure, Parkland shares have continued to plummet, falling from a high of 187.5p in September to a close of 106.5p last night.

Institutional investors are also understood to be concerned at Mr Lodder's treatment and the lack of any obvious succession plan at Parkland.

The company is 24 per cent owned by the Hanson family, one of whom, Paul Hanson, sits on the board as deputy chairman. John Hanson was chief executive until he recruited Mr Lodder into the company. Mr Hanson then left to run Greenwoods, a chain of small menswear shops owned by his father-in-law.

The chairman of Greenwoods, a 64-year-old textiles director called John Jackson, has taken over temporarily as chief executive of Parkland.

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Coats Viyella rules out disposals as profits slump

By Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

COATS VIYELLA, the underperforming textiles group, yesterday confirmed plans to press ahead with a demerger of its clothing and home furnishings business this year and ruled out the sale of any of its key units.

The group, which issued a profits warning last December, said headline pre-tax profits tumbled to £52.9m in 1997 from £83.3m a year earlier. One-off items wiped a further £19.6m off profits and the company cut its total dividend to 4.7p per share from 8.8p in 1996.

Michael Ost, the chief executive, quashed speculation that the group could sell part of the Viyella business earmarked for demerger. The division includes fashion chain Jaeger, Dorma household textiles and a contract clothing business which is a large supplier to Marks and Spencer.

"People want to buy bits of our business all the time. But I tell shareholders it is not in their interests to sell significant parts of the group now," Mr Ost said. "Why? Because we are at the bottom of our performance cycle and a sale would be crystallising shareholder loss."

Coats Viyella said its 1997 results were disappointing and

added that none of its operating divisions had performed to their full potential.

Mr Ost detected some signs of improvement so far this year, saying trading in both arms of the company was "nicely ahead" of the first two months of last year. He said he hoped the dividend cut would prove to be a one-off adjustment.

The company said it had suffered from the effects of the economic slowdown in Brazil while the strength of sterling had reduced operating profit by almost £20m.

Coats' shares, which have languished below 90p since the profit warning late last year, closed down 0.5p at 86p.

Sir David Alliance, the chairman, said he believed the planned demerger, which shareholders will vote on later this year, would help the group to realise its potential. Post-demerger, Coats will incorporate the group's largest division, which supplies thread to the clothing, footwear and automotive industries as well as threads and yarns for domestic sewing. It will also include a precision engineering business.

There are plans for a second demerger of the engineering arm, which could be spun off by the middle of next year.

— Reuter

Germany predicts economic turnaround this year

The German economy is expected to grow by between 2.5 and 3 per cent this year and unemployment is set to decline, according to the government's annual report issued yesterday. "The worst is behind us," declared Gunter Rexrodt, the economics minister. "The turnaround in the labour market is increasingly visible." It forecast average unemployment for the current year would be around 4.4 million, and the unemployment rate would be 11.5 per cent, up by 0.1 per cent on last year. Altogether, the government expects 200,000 new jobs will be created. This is not the first time the government has spotted the green shoots recovery in the jobs market, only to be contradicted by another bout of unforeseen loss. With six months to go to the elections, Chancellor Helmut Kohl has extra reasons to project optimism this time.

SBC seeks new bond boss

The Swiss Bank Corporation (SBC) has unsuccessfully tried to poach Edson Mitchell, head of global markets at Deutsche Bank, to head up its bond business. The move came only months after SBC appointed Andrew Siciliano to the role. SBC wanted to split Mr Siciliano's job in two. The new name as SBC and its merger partner UBS reported full-year results. The two banks made a combined loss of 472m Swiss francs (£193m) in 1997 after restructuring charges of SFr7bn. Both banks were hit by poor trading performances and the Asian crisis.

Hanson sells off crane arm

Hanson finally unloaded its crane-making business yesterday, taking another step in its aim to become a fully focused building materials group. The former conglomerate is selling Grove Worldwide to Keystone of the US for \$605m (£365m), in line with market expectations.

RM wins £1m PFI deal

RM, the computer software company, has won a Public Finance Initiative contract worth £1m to manage Tynemouth College's information technology (IT) facilities. The deal is the first of its type in the sector. RM said it secured the contract for six years. RM will create a new 100 workstation IT suite with fully networked internet access and will also provide a complete support staff service.

Reports of Rolls sale denied

Vickers, the parent of Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Ltd, yesterday said it had not made a decision on a buyer for the luxury car maker. "The process is still ongoing," a Vickers spokeswoman said, responding to a report in *Bid*, the German tabloid daily newspaper. VW believed it had won the battle to acquire Rolls, the paper said. The paper claimed Volkswagen's chief executive, Ferdinand Piech, and the Lower Saxony premier Gerhard Schroeder met Graham Morris, Rolls-Royce's chief executive. Neither VW nor Vickers would comment. BMW, which is also interested in Rolls, said it wasn't surprised to learn of the VW meeting. Rolls is expected to fetch £300m-£400m.

Shares and units listings

Owing to a system failure with our information supplier Bloomberg, the listings of London shares and unit trust prices published in yesterday's *Independent* were incorrect. We apologise for the error.

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Second liners close the gap on blue chips

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

AS blue chips struggled to hit another peak the rest of the stock market was in much more heady form, with second and third liners striding confidently to record levels.

Footsie's gain was a modest 1.3 points to 5,829.8; the mid caps index jumped 30 to 5,316.8 and the small caps index rose 12.4 to 2,523.4p.

The market's undercard has this year convincingly moved to narrow the huge gap which the long blue-chip bull run had opened up.

Many fund managers, trooping back into equities after building their cash hoards, have decided blue chips have become too expensive and the real bargains lurk in the rest of the market.

The latest Merrill Lynch survey among fund managers recorded a sharp increase, from 15 per cent to 38 per cent, in the number of managers preferring mid cap stocks.

Merrill Lynch's Trevor Greatham believes "medium-

sized companies tend to be more sensitive to the domestic economy than their larger Footsie cousins".

The quarterly Footsie revision resulted in Compass, the contract caterer, gaining membership with Misy's, the computer group, just missing out. Relegated Dixons firmed 1.5p to 491.5p.

Seven companies joined the supporting mid cap index, including consultant WS Atkins and chemical group Yule Catto. Among the casualties were Powerscreen and Body Shop.

As is so often the case, investors had already discounted the latest changes and even some of the adjustments which will be made in the next few months.

Takeovers should mean at least two mid cap changes before June, prompting the shares topping the reserve list to reach new peaks. Engineer Meggit firmed 0.5p to 182.5p; Business Post rose 25p to

792.5p with market research group Taylor Nelson resting at 100.75p.

Compass, up 2p to 950p, was helped by Remolki's initial expansionist mood. Chief executive Sir Clive Thompson hinted the environmental and business support group might be ready to mount another major takeover.

Its last big deal was the £2bn acquisition of BET nearly two years ago. Compass, as well as Securicor, a Danish group, ISS, have been rumoured to be in Rentokil's sights. Securicor improved 27p to 383.5p.

The 1,100p SG Securities target price for Kingfisher has almost been reached with the shares up 42p to 1,072p. Great Universal Stores, bidding for Argos, fell 6.5p to 785p, as Goldman Sachs offered around 6 million shares.

Best performing blue chip, reflecting its profit upgrading, was British Energy with a 24p gain to 494p. Bass, with Gold-

man forecasting 1,250p, frothed up 50p to 1,050p.

Cable & Wireless, ahead of an analysts' dinner, hardened 24.5p to 676p and Tate & Lyle was little changed at 525p after Dresdner Kleinwort Benson trimmed its profits estimates from £241m to £234m. It cut its forecast last month.

Not for the first time the

Standard Chartered banking group was the hot takeover tip. The shares climbed 23.5p to 890p with rumours swirling Barclays, or Lloyds TSB, would today roll out a 1,300p to 1,450p bid. In January Standard's shares were down to 543p.

Norwich Union succumbed to profit taking after its results and its failure to produce a special dividend, falling 28.5p to 481.5p. Schroders, flying high on bid hopes, fell 65p to 2,352p as chairman Wim Bischoff affirmed his intention to remain independent and added: "A number of people have come to tell us how wonderful they think we are but no, we've received no firm offers."

After Tuesday's order-driven trading confusion, BPE, the building materials group, traded at 355p, an alleged fall from 400p.

Aberdeen Asset Management, on the smaller cap awakening and the heady bid

climate among financial companies, rose 4.5p to 109p; the price is up from 90p this year.

Car dealers again moved up a gear. Cowi, with figures followed by a presentation next week, motored 10p to 132.5p, a high.

Merrill Lynch was in a bearish mood downgrading chemical group Brest International, off 2p to 124p, to sell. It also put reduce signs over HP Bulmer, the cider group unchanged at 335p, and Enagis, up 33.5p to 530.5p.

CrestaCare, a health group, put on 1.25p to 28.75p following. It is thought, investment meetings in Scotland. Hard-pressed Watney's Mining rose 4.5p to 16p on talk of a cash injection. Three years ago the shares were 132p.

Independent Insurance continued to strengthen on its results, up another 122.5p to 1,517.5p and pub chain JD Wetherspoon rose 25p to 326.5p in response to its figures.

TAKING STOCK

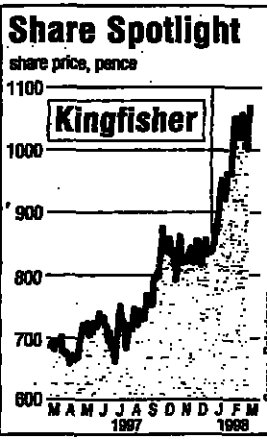
ITE, formerly Cementone, returns to market on Tuesday, having raised £38m through a placing and open offer and taken over, in a £65m deal, a business organising exhibitions in the former Soviet Union.

The cash call was made at 47.5p; there are hopes the shares will start trading at 62p.

ITE represents the market comeback of Laurie Lewis, founder of Blenheim, the exhibition business taken over by United News & Media.

Middlesex, the metals group with extensive interests in the former Soviet Union, held at 4.75p. Talks continue with Reo Gazprom, the oil giant, to buy a stake, initially 15 per cent, in the company.

The holding is likely to be eventually lifted to 25 per cent. Middlesex, run by Masoud Alkhatib, is due to announce profits in the next two months. They could emerge at around £6m, down from £8m.



High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div	Div Yld
100.75	100.75	Taylor Nelson	100.75	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
792.50	792.50	Market Research	792.50	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1050.00	1050.00	Bass	1050.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1072.00	1072.00	Kingfisher	1072.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1090.00	1090.00	Standard Chartered	1090.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1100.00	1100.00	Compass	1100.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1124.00	1124.00	BPE	1124.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1132.50	1132.50	Cow	1132.50	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1151.75	1151.75	Independent Insurance	1151.75	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1160.00	1160.00	Watney's Mining	1160.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1172.50	1172.50	JD Wetherspoon	1172.50	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1182.50	1182.50	Meggit	1182.50	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1192.50	1192.50	Business Post	1192.50	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1200.00	1200.00	SG Securities	1200.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1212.00	1212.00	Great Universal Stores	1212.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1224.00	1224.00	Argos	1224.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1235.00	1235.00	Thames Valley	1235.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1241.00	1241.00	HP Bulmer	1241.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1242.00	1242.00	Brest International	1242.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1243.00	1243.00	Enagis	1243.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1244.00	1244.00	CrestaCare	1244.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1245.00	1245.00	Watney's Mining	1245.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1246.00	1246.00	JD Wetherspoon	1246.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1247.00	1247.00	Meggit	1247.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1248.00	1248.00	Business Post	1248.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1249.00	1249.00	SG Securities	1249.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1250.00	1250.00	Great Universal Stores	1250.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1251.00	1251.00	Argos	1251.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1252.00	1252.00	Thames Valley	1252.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1253.00	1253.00	HP Bulmer	1253.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1254.00	1254.00	Brest International	1254.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1255.00	1255.00	Enagis	1255.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1256.00	1256.00	CrestaCare	1256.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1257.00	1257.00	Watney's Mining	1257.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1258.00	1258.00	JD Wetherspoon	1258.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1259.00	1259.00	Meggit	1259.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1260.00	1260.00	Business Post	1260.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1261.00	1261.00	SG Securities	1261.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1262.00	1262.00	Great Universal Stores	1262.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1263.00	1263.00	Argos	1263.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1264.00	1264.00	Thames Valley	1264.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1265.00	1265.00	HP Bulmer	1265.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1266.00	1266.00	Brest International	1266.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1267.00	1267.00	Enagis	1267.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1268.00	1268.00	CrestaCare	1268.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1269.00	1269.00	Watney's Mining	1269.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1270.00	1270.00	JD Wetherspoon	1270.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1271.00	1271.00	Meggit	1271.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1272.00	1272.00	Business Post	1272.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1273.00	1273.00	SG Securities	1273.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1274.00	1274.00	Great Universal Stores	1274.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1275.00	1275.00	Argos	1275.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1276.00	1276.00	Thames Valley	1276.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1277.00	1277.00	HP Bulmer	1277.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1278.00	1278.00	Brest International	1278.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1279.00	1279.00	Enagis	1279.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1280.00	1280.00	CrestaCare	1280.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1281.00	1281.00	Watney's Mining	1281.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1282.00	1282.00	JD Wetherspoon	1282.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1283.00	1283.00	Meggit	1283.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1284.00	1284.00	Business Post	1284.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1285.00	1285.00	SG Securities	1285.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1286.00	1286.00	Great Universal Stores	1286.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1287.00	1287.00	Argos	1287.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1288.00	1288.00	Thames Valley	1288.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1289.00	1289.00	HP Bulmer	1289.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1290.00	1290.00	Brest International	1290.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1291.00	1291.00	Enagis	1291.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1292.00	1292.00	CrestaCare	1292.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1293.00	1293.00	Watney's Mining	1293.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1294.00	1294.00	JD Wetherspoon	1294.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1295.00	1295.00	Meggit	1295.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1296.00	1296.00	Business Post	1296.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1297.00	1297.00	SG Securities	1297.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1298.00	1298.00	Great Universal Stores	1298.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1299.00	1299.00	Argos	1299.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1300.00	1300.00	Thames Valley	1300.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00

Learn from the experts.

Jim Slater, Terry Smith and Alvan Hall are just some of the speakers at The 1998 Private Investors Conference. Sponsored by Charles Schwab, and supported by Bloomberg Money, this unique event is on Saturday 25th April 1998. Tickets start at only £15, but places are limited. Call 0870 606 4444 for details, quoting ref. IN150.

Charles Schwab MONEY

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100.75	100.75	Taylor Nelson	100.75	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
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1072.00	1072.00	Kingfisher	1072.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1090.00	1090.00	Standard Chartered	1090.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1100.00	1100.00	Compass	1100.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1124.00	1124.00	BPE	1124.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1132.50	1132.50	Cow	1132.50	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1151.75	1151.75	Independent Insurance	1151.75	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1160.00	1160.00	Watney's Mining	1160.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1172.50	1172.50	JD Wetherspoon	1172.50	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1182.50	1182.50	Meggit	1182.50	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1192.50	1192.50	Business Post	1192.50	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1200.00	1200.00	SG Securities	1200.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1212.00	1212.00	Great Universal Stores	1212.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
1224.00	1224.00	Argos	1224.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00</

Why squeezing the rich helps poll ratings more than the Exchequer



DIANE COYLE
ON CLOSING
UP TAX
LOOPHOLES

WEALTH is seriously out of fashion. The tide turned earlier this decade, partly in reaction to the conspicuous excesses of the late 1980s. The Nineties have been a decade of downshifting, saving not spending, pensions rather than Porsches. Two American economists proposed, a couple of years ago, a special consumption tax on luxury items to pay for public services for the poor, arguing that wasteful expenditure ought to be discouraged by the tax system.

And the Labour Party milked fat cats - to mix metaphors - for all they were worth in the run-up to last year's election, profiting from general resentment about the extent to which the lucky few were pulling away from the rest. That accumulated resentment, along with a spot of embarrassment over Geoffrey Robinson's financial arrangements, is the political fuel driving the Chancellor's expected crackdown on tax avoidance in next week's Budget.

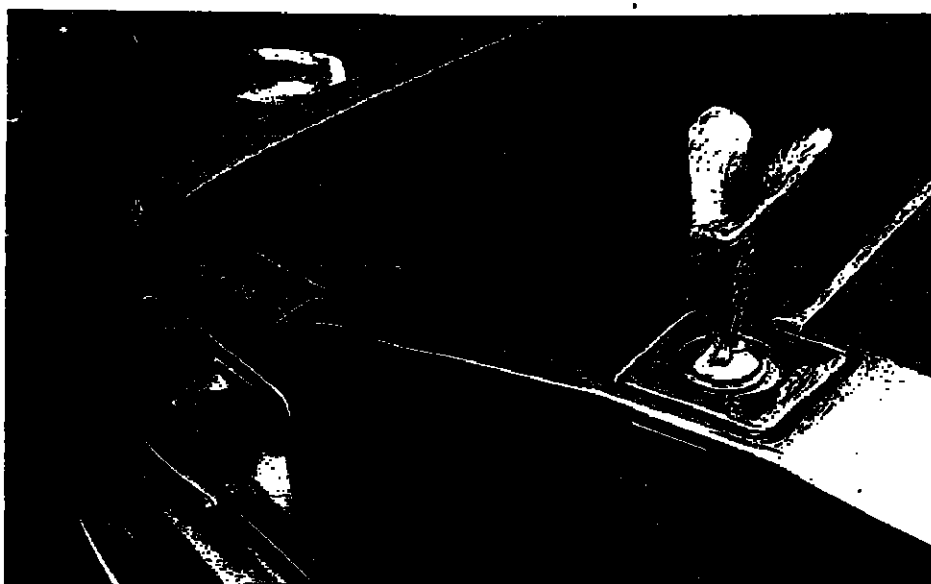
On the face of it, the rich present an irresistible target. Take the argument about spending on luxury goods like expensive cars and designer clothes. Ever since Thorstein Veblen first analysed the phenomenon of conspicuous consumption, it has been understood that some goods command a higher price because of their status rather than their intrinsic value. Rolex

watches are not necessarily better at telling the time than far cheaper watches, and many would argue that they don't even look any nicer. But they certainly flaunt their owner's wealth.

The economist Paul Krugman has recently pointed out that status goods like this represent a market failure. The reason is that there is an externality involved in my purchase of a Rolls-Royce or a Rolex or, the latest hot fashion item, a pair of Gucci slingbacks. I reduce the value existing owners of these items derive from theirs by reducing the scarcity value. This is why status goods are either extremely expensive, so that they can be rationed by price, or fall out of fashion very quickly, as the herd catches up with the trend-setter. A few, like Van Gogh paintings, are rationed by genuine scarcity but, in general, conspicuous consumption creates a form of congestion. It is just like traffic congestion where every extra car on the roads makes the use of a car less valuable and more expensive for those already driving.

In other words, the rich engage in an arms race of conspicuous consumption that eats up resources in a way that is not only frivolous but actually reduces well-being for others. Professor Krugman suggests we might want to encourage the status-seekers to do something else, like give their money to charity or the arts, or even work less and spend more time with their family. Taxing their conspicuous purchases heavily might be another way of discouraging their welfare-reducing activity.

Another policy option, and the one on Gordon Brown's agenda, is making very sure the wealthy pay all the taxes they ought to anyway. Tax avoidance is perfectly legal, but most people who are not doing it think it shouldn't be allowed. Public favour about "missing billions" in tax revenue is easily whipped up. Some wild estimates put the amount gone astray from the government's coffers at as much as £100bn, when total tax revenues are just over £300bn.



Conspicuous consumption: A tax on 'status goods' could hit UK firms like Rolls-Royce

There is no shadow of a doubt that wealthy individuals and businesses alike go out of their way not to pay unnecessary tax. After all, the rich are different; they have accountants. But the policy debate ought to recognise that tax avoidance is the other side of the coin of government attempts to shape people's behaviour. For every tax break eventually becomes a tax loophole. They just seemed a really good idea when they were introduced.

All the big tax reliefs many of us enjoy fall into this category - mortgage interest relief, profit related pay, Peps and Tassas. To list them is to see how governments end up seeing all these attempts to achieve desirable outcomes such as harder work or more saving as loopholes that are costing too much in foregone revenue and need plugging.

The same is true of less obvious tax breaks too. When business expansion schemes could invest in property they became a hugely popular way for relatively well-off people to shelter some of their savings from tax. And consider the Chancellor's introduction of superior allowances for investment in the film industry. For most rich people this is not an attractive tax shelter because it involves a big risk of losing all

the money if the film flops. But for a company which might think about investing in films anyway, and for which losses could prove useful to reduce its other tax liabilities, it is a dream tax break. As Fox Searchlight, a Rupert Murdoch company which funded *The Full Monty*, discovered, the film might even make a huge profit. The renowned increased allowances for investment in small high-technology firms will turn out to be the same kind of break.

But does this mean such tax incentives are misguided? Not necessarily. A thriving economy does need thriving small and growing businesses in cutting-edge industries. It is an unfortunate but unavoidable fact that entrepreneurs are the kind of people who will devote much ingenuity to avoiding paying taxes they can legally avoid. After all, it is the desire to make money that makes them entrepreneurs in the first place. But this does not mean that we should not want entrepreneurs. They are essential to the health of the economy. If the government thinks we want more investment in certain specific areas, a special tax break is a sensible way of encouraging it. After all, they can always be revoked later. Corporate avoidance of taxes

is another matter because some companies do exploit both the difficulty for the revenue authorities of keeping track of internal transactions which cross national borders and the increasing competition between countries to attract investment. There has been a bit of a race downwards in corporation tax rates over the past decade or so - good if it boosts investment in total, but not so good if it simply deprives one country of investment and relocates it in another. This is a problem that member governments of the OECD are trying to tackle collectively.

As for a consumption tax on status goods, this would have an economic downside. It would reduce sales of luxury goods, some of which are made in Britain - Rolls-Royce cars, Vivienne Westwood dresses, Mulberry bags. Given that the economic harm from conspicuous consumption affects only the wealthy, a cost-benefit analysis might show the envy-adjusted national interest, giving a higher weight to the masses than to fat cats and other rich people, would be maximised by simply letting those who want to chase status pay on their own. As long as they pay their fair share of the other taxes.

PEOPLE & BUSINESS

JOHN WILLCOCK



CHURCH'S Shoes, the Northampton-based cobbler to those who can nearly afford handmade shoes but not quite, is celebrating its 125th anniversary.

And what better way to celebrate than produce some new shoes? Church's is bringing out three classic brogues, named after the three founding Church brothers - William, Alfred and Thomas.

The shoes will be produced in a limited run of 3,000 in total, and made out of "only the finest selected skins". They'll even be numbered and have their own cleaning kits.

Over 2,000 of the birthday pairs have been sold, pretty impressive considering they cost a toe-curling £395 a shot.

The company is still chaired by one of the founding family, John Church, who is a great grandson of one of the trio.

And just to show it is still a go-ahead concern, Church's has just sold 8,000 pairs of smart brown brogue shoes to the Royal Navy, to replace the sailors' traditional ocean-going black plimsolls.

ELLIOTT BERNARD, boss of Chelsfield and Elliott of property developers, has got a new role, chairman of the South Bank Centre, London's premier arts complex.

Mr Bernard, the wheeler-dealer with a huge house in London's posh Eaton Square, got the job this week when Sir Brian Corby resigned over the Arts Council's scrapping of a £75m grant for the South Bank.

The grant was needed for a huge refurbishment of the complex, which includes the Royal Festival Hall and the National Theatre. The scheme featured a vast glass roof designed by Sir Richard Rogers.

Mr Bernard usually spends his time cooking up property schemes like the office and hotel complex in Paddington which will exploit the new, fast rail link to Heathrow Airport.

Whether he can handle the luvvies of the South Bank is another matter.

CONGRATULATIONS to Ian Hay Davison, who has won the accountant's top accolade - the 1998 Founding Societies' Centenary Award.

Not that Mr Hay Davison is the kind of man who needs congratulating too much. He has a pretty healthy view of his own abilities as it is. UK managing partner of Arthur Andersen at 35, he left to tackle the problems of Lloyd's of London as its first chief executive. He has also acted as a DTI inspector into the Stonehouse companies and headed two Price Commission investigations.

And, on the day that *The Independent* passes into new ownership, let's remember that it was Mr Hay Davison who, as the former head of Newspaper Publishing, the paper's owner, did so much to engineer the previous ownership deal with the Mirror Group.

Indeed, if you were to spend much time with Mr Hay Davison, you might start to imagine that he had single-handedly built the Channel Tunnel and had discovered penicillin in boot. But that would be churlish.

There is one job that has eluded Mr Hay Davison so far, that of chief executive of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, the body that gave him this week's award. Andrew Colquhoun has stood down, and the post is being re-designated secretary general.

But Mr Hay Davison laughs at my suggestion. "It's too close to what I did at Lloyd's," he says. He adds that his views on the ICA are well known, that the president's powers should be beefed up so that he, not the secretariat, actually runs the place.

As one former president of the ICA once put it: "About the only thing the president decides at the Institute is what goes on the menus."

YESTERDAY was National No Smoking Day, which didn't put the Fair Cigarette Tax Campaign off from claiming that "tax rises on tobacco hit the poor harder than the rich".

The Fair Cigarette Tax Campaign is funded by the Tobacco Manufacturers' Association. The campaign's claim causes me great concern. Is Eddie George, a famous puffer of multiple packets of fags per day, secretly groaning under the weight of tobacco taxes? And how about poor old Ken Clarke, Prince of the Pantheons?

Lord Cairns, chairman of BAT, is another unrepentant smoker, not to mention most of the directors of Imperial Tobacco. Victor Rice, chief executive officer of LucasVarity, is another unreconstructed puffer who is obviously only one step away from the bailiffs because of his nicotine addiction.

CSFB's tactic of putting "golden handcuffs" on key BZW staff when it bought the equities and corporate finance divisions of the Barclays investment bank subsidiary is having an impact.

Commerzbank has just poached Mark Eban, an old BZW hand, from CSFB to be its first Global Head of Equity Capital Markets. Right at the end of the press announcement Commerzbank notes: "As one of BZW's key employees, Mark Eban is expected to be kept out of the market for several months before being able to join Commerzbank."

Never mind. I'm sure Mr Eban has plenty of gardening to catch up on.

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 month
UK	10000		
Australia	2.4676	2.4648	2.4586
Austria	13.7584	13.7584	13.7584
Belgium	66.2800	66.2800	66.2800
Canada	2.3380	2.3380	2.3380
Denmark	13.6700	13.6700	13.6700
France	166.3500	166.3500	166.3500
Germany	163.2500	163.2500	163.2500
Greece	340.7500	340.7500	340.7500
Italy	1936.2500	1936.2500	1936.2500
Japan	163.2500	163.2500	163.2500
Netherlands	166.3500	166.3500	166.3500
New Zealand	1.5200	1.5200	1.5200
Portugal	200.4800	200.4800	200.4800
Spain	166.3500	166.3500	166.3500
Sweden	13.6700	13.6700	13.6700
Switzerland	1.4548	1.4548	1.4548
US	1.5471	1.5471	1.5471

Other Spot Rates

Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	10.000	10.000
Brazil	1.000	1.000
China	8.2750	8.2750
Czech Rep	35.4640	35.4640
Egypt	1.000	1.000
Ghana	30.000	30.000
Hungary	20.000	20.000
India	47.5000	47.5000
Indonesia	1.000	1.000
Kuwait	1.000	1.000
Nigeria	1.000	1.000

Interest Rates

UK	Germany	US	Japan
Base	2.50%	5.50%	5.50%
Discount	2.00%	5.00%	5.00%
Prime	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%
3 month	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%
6 month	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%
9 month	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%
12 month	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%

Money Market Rates

Overnight	1 week	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year
Base	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%
Discount	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%
Prime	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%

Liffe Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est Floor	Open
Long GB	Mar-98	125.41	125.33	125.47	125.40
5 Yr US	Mar-98	102.42	102.35	102.40	102.38
German Bund	Mar-98	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Italian Bond	Mar-98	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Japan Govt	Mar-98	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
3 Mth Euro	Mar-98	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28

Commodity Futures

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est Floor	Open
WTI Crude	Mar-98	28.41	28.33	28.47	28.40
WTI Crude	Mar-98	28.41	28.33	28.47	28.40
WTI Crude	Mar-98	28.41	28.33	28.47	28.40

Industrial Metals

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est Floor	Open
Aluminum	Mar-98	1.45	1.44	1.45	1.45
Aluminum	Mar-98	1.45	1.44	1.45	1.45
Aluminum	Mar-98	1.45	1.44	1.45	1.45

Precious Metals

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est Floor	Open
Gold	Mar-98	380.41	380.33	380.47	380.40
Gold	Mar-98	380.41	380.33	380.47	380.40
Gold	Mar-98	380.41	380.33	380.47	380.40

Other Softs

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est Floor	Open
WTI Crude	Mar-98	28.41	28.33	28.47	28.40
WTI Crude	Mar-98	28.41	28.33	28.47	28.40
WTI Crude	Mar-98	28.41	28.33	28.47	28.40

Latest Unit Trust Prices

Fund	Set	Buy	Ytd
ABF Growth Trust Ltd	2.4676	2.4648	2.4586
ABF Growth Trust Ltd	2.4676	2.4648	2.4586
ABF Growth Trust Ltd	2.4676	2.4648	2.4586

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Fund	Set	Buy	Ytd
ABF Growth Trust Ltd	2.4676	2.4648	2.4586
ABF Growth Trust Ltd	2.4676	2.4648	2.4586
ABF Growth Trust Ltd	2.4676	2.4648	2.4586

Rubbahunish gamble is Imperial riddle

Racing

A PLUNGE on Imperial Cup outsider Rubbahunish caused his odds to tumble from 50-1 to 7-1 with William Hill yesterday. But doubts were raised last night over whether the seven-year-old will even line up at Sandown on Saturday.

Rubbahunish was trained on the Flat by Peter Chapple-Hyam. He later finished third in the 1996 Welsh Champion Hurdle but more recently has been at the stables of James Bennett. The gelding has since switched to another small yard, that of Martin Bosley, after finishing unplaced in two outings this jump season.

Ladbrokes also reported a big gamble on the horse, from 40-1 to 8-1. But the Bosley stable said they were mystified. Sara Bosley, the trainer's wife, said: "I'd love to know who's been hacking him."

"We don't gamble and Martin has been invited over to France today to play golf and knows nothing of it. And

Rubbahunish is not 100 per cent certain to run. We've got one horse in the yard a little off-colour and we will have to wait and see the results of a scope and a blood-test.

"He has been working very well and we were very lucky to get him. He has got ability but he has run two stinking races and I don't know how anyone seeing those can think that they are being clever by backing him," she added.

Rubbahunish is 6lb out of the handicap for the £30,000-added Imperial Cup and will only reach the handicap proper if top-weights Cadougl and Star Rage are not declared tomorrow.

Also available at 8-1 with Ladbrokes for Saturday's race

is Alabang, confirmed a runner yesterday.

The seven-year-old will be attempting to end a frustrating run of placed efforts. After a promising second at Wetherby the Julie Camacho-trained gelding looked a likely future winner but in his two subsequent starts at Sandown and Kempton he failed to go through with his effort.

"Well, he runs at Sandown but I don't know how he should be ridden," the trainer's father Maurice Camacho said. "He just comes there cantering but doesn't find anything off the bridle."

Graham Bradley rode Alabang in the Lanzarote Handicap Hurdle at Kempton last time when, after appearing to

have the race sewn up, the combination failed to get to Shahrur on the run-in and were beaten four lengths.

"Graham rides him again on Saturday and I'll have to have a word with him as to how to ride the horse," Camacho said.

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: Champagne Friend (Towcester 3.40)
NB: Steeple Jack (Towcester 4.10)

"Brad seems to think we are riding him properly but I don't know, maybe he needs to be in front sooner."

If successful on Saturday Alabang may go for the £50,000 bonus put up by Sunderland bookmaking firm for the horse

who wins the Imperial Cup and follows up in any race at next week's Cheltenham Festival.

"We would have to go for it although I would have considerable reservations about running a horse like Alabang too quick," he added. "His main aim after Saturday are Aintree and the Swinton at Haydock on 2 May."

In the ante-post market for the Cheltenham Festival, Space Trucker was the focus of attention yesterday. Coral reported laying Space Trucker to lose "more than £70,000" in the Arkle Trophy (Novice) Chase and cut the Irish-trained horse's price from 16-1 to 12-1.

Space Trucker has failed to jump fences with any great flu-

ency but warmed up for Tuesday's race with a work-out at the Curragh yesterday under big-race jockey Norman Williamson.

Jessica Harrington, the gelding's trainer, was pleased with the schooling session and hopes the ground will not be too soft at Cheltenham. "Space Trucker jumped very well," she said. "A little drier ground would be a help but at least it's the first race on the chase course and we should have the best of the ground."

A year ago Space Trucker was third in the Champion Hurdle but is unplaced since occupying the same place Dardini on soft going at Leopardstown last December.

There were no moves in the

Cheltenham Gold Cup betting despite outsider Strong Promise working in pleasing fashion at Newmarket yesterday.

Chris Kinnane, assistant to trainer Geoff Hubbard, said: "I rode him in a gallop with one of our other horses over nine furlongs on what was surprisingly good ground and he worked very well. So, God willing, it's all systems go for Cheltenham now."

Following an encouraging reappearance when a five-length second to One Man in Ascof's Comet Chase last month Strong Promise was beaten by Go Ballistic when odds-on at Wincanton two weeks later.

Norman Williamson felt that the seven-year-old was not fit enough at Wincanton but it is more likely that Strong Promise did not stay the trip of three miles and one furlong. If the latter is true, his stamina will certainly expire in the Gold Cup.

The Grey Monk, a more credible Gold Cup contender, will race a couple of weeks later.

Jet lag proves an advantage for McManus

Snooker

ALAN MCMANUS announced his return as a title contender by trouncing Ronnie O'Sullivan 5-1 for a place in the quarter-finals of the Thailand Masters in Bangkok yesterday.

McManus was back to his best and needed only 82 minutes to prevent O'Sullivan, the winner of last month's Regal Scottish Open, joining the select band of players to win back-to-back ranking events.

"I've not played consistently for a year or two now," said the Scot, who has failed to lift a trophy since the 1996 Thailand Masters. "When you get used to playing in semi-finals and finals it isn't much fun getting knocked out early on. There's no doubt in my mind I can still compete at the highest level."

McManus has turned jet lag to advantage by putting in hours of practice in the early hours of the day. "I played for a couple of hours from five o'clock this morning and all the practice has definitely helped."

McManus, successful in only three of his previous nine meetings with O'Sullivan, was in control through most of the match, only surrendering the initiative in the third frame. He missed a routine pink into the middle pocket and gave O'Sullivan the chance to put together a break of 65, which allowed him to reduce the deficit to 2-1.

Results, Digest, page 31

Savill steps into Lord Wakeham's shoes as member of Tote Board

PETER SAVILL was yesterday appointed by Home Secretary Jack Straw to serve as a member of the British Horseracing Board's nominee on the Horserace Totalisator Board.

He takes up his two-year appointment on 1 April and, as a member of the Board, will receive a salary of £8,578 a year for one to two days' work a month.

Savill, 50, who is a well-known owner, is the president of the Racehorse Owners' Association and a director of the BHB.

The Tote Board has a chairman and seven members. Five are part-time non-executive members, the other two are executive members.

The chairman and all the members of the Board are appointed by the Home Secretary. Savill takes over from Lord Wakeham who recently resigned from the BHB after being unable to agree with its future strategy.

Results

BANGOR

1.50: 1. KADONJIAN NONANTAS (J. A. McCarthy) 4-7 sec. 2. Grand Cavalier 4-11. 3. Beely Nova 5-11. 4. 11 sec. 27. 5. 11 sec. 27. 6. 11 sec. 27. 7. 11 sec. 27. 8. 11 sec. 27. 9. 11 sec. 27. 10. 11 sec. 27. 11. 11 sec. 27. 12. 11 sec. 27. 13. 11 sec. 27. 14. 11 sec. 27. 15. 11 sec. 27. 16. 11 sec. 27. 17. 11 sec. 27. 18. 11 sec. 27. 19. 11 sec. 27. 20. 11 sec. 27. 21. 11 sec. 27. 22. 11 sec. 27. 23. 11 sec. 27. 24. 11 sec. 27. 25. 11 sec. 27. 26. 11 sec. 27. 27. 11 sec. 27. 28. 11 sec. 27. 29. 11 sec. 27. 30. 11 sec. 27. 31. 11 sec. 27. 32. 11 sec. 27. 33. 11 sec. 27. 34. 11 sec. 27. 35. 11 sec. 27. 36. 11 sec. 27. 37. 11 sec. 27. 38. 11 sec. 27. 39. 11 sec. 27. 40. 11 sec. 27. 41. 11 sec. 27. 42. 11 sec. 27. 43. 11 sec. 27. 44. 11 sec. 27. 45. 11 sec. 27. 46. 11 sec. 27. 47. 11 sec. 27. 48. 11 sec. 27. 49. 11 sec. 27. 50. 11 sec. 27. 51. 11 sec. 27. 52. 11 sec. 27. 53. 11 sec. 27. 54. 11 sec. 27. 55. 11 sec. 27. 56. 11 sec. 27. 57. 11 sec. 27. 58. 11 sec. 27. 59. 11 sec. 27. 60. 11 sec. 27. 61. 11 sec. 27. 62. 11 sec. 27. 63. 11 sec. 27. 64. 11 sec. 27. 65. 11 sec. 27. 66. 11 sec. 27. 67. 11 sec. 27. 68. 11 sec. 27. 69. 11 sec. 27. 70. 11 sec. 27. 71. 11 sec. 27. 72. 11 sec. 27. 73. 11 sec. 27. 74. 11 sec. 27. 75. 11 sec. 27. 76. 11 sec. 27. 77. 11 sec. 27. 78. 11 sec. 27. 79. 11 sec. 27. 80. 11 sec. 27. 81. 11 sec. 27. 82. 11 sec. 27. 83. 11 sec. 27. 84. 11 sec. 27. 85. 11 sec. 27. 86. 11 sec. 27. 87. 11 sec. 27. 88. 11 sec. 27. 89. 11 sec. 27. 90. 11 sec. 27. 91. 11 sec. 27. 92. 11 sec. 27. 93. 11 sec. 27. 94. 11 sec. 27. 95. 11 sec. 27. 96. 11 sec. 27. 97. 11 sec. 27. 98. 11 sec. 27. 99. 11 sec. 27. 100. 11 sec. 27. 101. 11 sec. 27. 102. 11 sec. 27. 103. 11 sec. 27. 104. 11 sec. 27. 105. 11 sec. 27. 106. 11 sec. 27. 107. 11 sec. 27. 108. 11 sec. 27. 109. 11 sec. 27. 110. 11 sec. 27. 111. 11 sec. 27. 112. 11 sec. 27. 113. 11 sec. 27. 114. 11 sec. 27. 115. 11 sec. 27. 116. 11 sec. 27. 117. 11 sec. 27. 118. 11 sec. 27. 119. 11 sec. 27. 120. 11 sec. 27. 121. 11 sec. 27. 122. 11 sec. 27. 123. 11 sec. 27. 124. 11 sec. 27. 125. 11 sec. 27. 126. 11 sec. 27. 127. 11 sec. 27. 128. 11 sec. 27. 129. 11 sec. 27. 130. 11 sec. 27. 131. 11 sec. 27. 132. 11 sec. 27. 133. 11 sec. 27. 134. 11 sec. 27. 135. 11 sec. 27. 136. 11 sec. 27. 137. 11 sec. 27. 138. 11 sec. 27. 139. 11 sec. 27. 140. 11 sec. 27. 141. 11 sec. 27. 142. 11 sec. 27. 143. 11 sec. 27. 144. 11 sec. 27. 145. 11 sec. 27. 146. 11 sec. 27. 147. 11 sec. 27. 148. 11 sec. 27. 149. 11 sec. 27. 150. 11 sec. 27. 151. 11 sec. 27. 152. 11 sec. 27. 153. 11 sec. 27. 154. 11 sec. 27. 155. 11 sec. 27. 156. 11 sec. 27. 157. 11 sec. 27. 158. 11 sec. 27. 159. 11 sec. 27. 160. 11 sec. 27. 161. 11 sec. 27. 162. 11 sec. 27. 163. 11 sec. 27. 164. 11 sec. 27. 165. 11 sec. 27. 166. 11 sec. 27. 167. 11 sec. 27. 168. 11 sec. 27. 169. 11 sec. 27. 170. 11 sec. 27. 171. 11 sec. 27. 172. 11 sec. 27. 173. 11 sec. 27. 174. 11 sec. 27. 175. 11 sec. 27. 176. 11 sec. 27. 177. 11 sec. 27. 178. 11 sec. 27. 179. 11 sec. 27. 180. 11 sec. 27. 181. 11 sec. 27. 182. 11 sec. 27. 183. 11 sec. 27. 184. 11 sec. 27. 185. 11 sec. 27. 186. 11 sec. 27. 187. 11 sec. 27. 188. 11 sec. 27. 189. 11 sec. 27. 190. 11 sec. 27. 191. 11 sec. 27. 192. 11 sec. 27. 193. 11 sec. 27. 194. 11 sec. 27. 195. 11 sec. 27. 196. 11 sec. 27. 197. 11 sec. 27. 198. 11 sec. 27. 199. 11 sec. 27. 200. 11 sec. 27. 201. 11 sec. 27. 202. 11 sec. 27. 203. 11 sec. 27. 204. 11 sec. 27. 205. 11 sec. 27. 206. 11 sec. 27. 207. 11 sec. 27. 208. 11 sec. 27. 209. 11 sec. 27. 210. 11 sec. 27. 211. 11 sec. 27. 212. 11 sec. 27. 213. 11 sec. 27. 214. 11 sec. 27. 215. 11 sec. 27. 216. 11 sec. 27. 217. 11 sec. 27. 218. 11 sec. 27. 219. 11 sec. 27. 220. 11 sec. 27. 221. 11 sec. 27. 222. 11 sec. 27. 223. 11 sec. 27. 224. 11 sec. 27. 225. 11 sec. 27. 226. 11 sec. 27. 227. 11 sec. 27. 228. 11 sec. 27. 229. 11 sec. 27. 230. 11 sec. 27. 231. 11 sec. 27. 232. 11 sec. 27. 233. 11 sec. 27. 234. 11 sec. 27. 235. 11 sec. 27. 236. 11 sec. 27. 237. 11 sec. 27. 238. 11 sec. 27. 239. 11 sec. 27. 240. 11 sec. 27. 241. 11 sec. 27. 242. 11 sec. 27. 243. 11 sec. 27. 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sec. 27. 362. 11 sec. 27. 363. 11 sec. 27. 364. 11 sec. 27. 365. 11 sec. 27. 366. 11 sec. 27. 367. 11 sec. 27. 368. 11 sec. 27. 369. 11 sec. 27. 370. 11 sec. 27. 371. 11 sec. 27. 372. 11 sec. 27. 373. 11 sec. 27. 374. 11 sec. 27. 375. 11 sec. 27. 376. 11 sec. 27. 377. 11 sec. 27. 378. 11 sec. 27. 379. 11 sec. 27. 380. 11 sec. 27. 381. 11 sec. 27. 382. 11 sec. 27. 383. 11 sec. 27. 384. 11 sec. 27. 385. 11 sec. 27. 386. 11 sec. 27. 387. 11 sec. 27. 388. 11 sec. 27. 389. 11 sec. 27. 390. 11 sec. 27. 391. 11 sec. 27. 392. 11 sec. 27. 393. 11 sec. 27. 394. 11 sec. 27. 395. 11 sec. 27. 396. 11 sec. 27. 397. 11 sec. 27. 398. 11 sec. 27. 399. 11 sec. 27. 400. 11 sec. 27. 401. 11 sec. 27. 402. 11 sec. 27. 403. 11 sec. 27. 404. 11 sec. 27. 405. 11 sec. 27. 406. 11 sec. 27. 407. 11 sec. 27. 408. 11 sec. 27. 409. 11 sec. 27. 410. 11 sec. 27. 411. 11 sec. 27. 412. 11 sec. 27. 413. 11 sec. 27. 414. 11 sec. 27. 415. 11 sec. 27. 416. 11 sec. 27. 417. 11 sec. 27. 418. 11 sec. 27. 419. 11 sec. 27. 420. 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sec. 27. 597. 11 sec. 27. 598. 11 sec. 27. 599. 11 sec. 27. 600. 11 sec. 27. 601. 11 sec. 27. 602. 11 sec. 27. 603. 11 sec. 27. 604. 11 sec. 27. 605. 11 sec. 27. 606. 11 sec. 27. 607. 11 sec. 27. 608. 11 sec. 27. 609. 11 sec. 27. 610. 11 sec. 27. 611. 11 sec. 27. 612. 11 sec. 27. 613. 11 sec. 27. 614. 11 sec. 27. 615. 11 sec. 27. 616. 11 sec. 27. 617. 11 sec. 27. 618. 11 sec. 27. 619. 11 sec. 27. 620. 11 sec. 27. 621. 11 sec. 27. 622. 11 sec. 27. 623. 11 sec. 27. 624. 11 sec. 27. 625. 11 sec. 27. 626. 11 sec. 27. 627. 11 sec. 27. 628. 11 sec. 27. 629. 11 sec. 27. 630. 11 sec. 27. 631. 11 sec. 27. 632. 11 sec. 27. 633. 11 sec

They fail to understand that football is nothing without passion

FOR years, I have had a secret ambition in life. It isn't to sail around the world, pilot a jet, shoot a hole in one or hit a winning streak in Las Vegas. It's to bang some of football's legislative heads together.

This earnest desire surfaced again last week with the announcement by Fifa, football's world governing body, that a foul tackle delivered from behind in the World Cup finals would result in instant dismissal. Get it? marginally wrong through an angle of 180 degrees and you're off.

You only have to ponder the edict for a moment to infer what it implies: a game ultimately without physical contact, in no time all challenges for the ball are effectively to be suppressed.

That is where the interpretation of the laws against foul play now stands, and a very rocky stance it is, and will remain so as long as there are people, often highly intelligent types, who believe that putting a foot in is detrimental to the entertainment. When compulsory cautions for fouls from behind were introduced at the World Cup finals in the United States four years ago, Fifa's policy resulted in a ludicrous proliferation of yellow cards, depleted teams and a betrayal of principles important to football's global development.

Nobody in their right mind condones violent play and there is clearly room for more intelligent interpretation, but some of the most thrilling football in World Cup history was made possible by ruthless acts of intervention.

The orange glow of Dutch football in the 1974 finals would not have been possible without the aggression of two militant midfielders, Johan Neeskens and Wim Van Hanegem, who could be relied on to regain possession. Gerson, the mainspring of Brazil's brilliant attacking surges in the 1970 finals, had to be approached with the utmost care and anyone who attempted to intimidate Pele was asking for trouble.

After many years of devoted research, and in common with people involved more directly in the game, I still have no clear idea of Fifa policy beyond its relentless exploitation of commercial possibilities.



KEN JONES

On the face of it, you might suppose that nothing Fifa attempts is more commendable than making life easier for the artist. But we should not forget that the greatest attackers in history have turned adhesive attention to their advantage. "If I could reach back and feel the mark-

er I knew he was in too close, making it easier for me to spin off him," Denis Law said in his heyday. Getting tight with Law carried other penalties too, all of them painful.

What prompted this sympathy for the man in possession? The imagined perceptions of a new audience or the belief that football must be tailored to the demands of its television paymasters?

The due to football's future lies, I suspect, in the growing and perhaps irreversible conviction of its governing body that tackling should disappear from the agenda.

Doubtless, plenty of people who follow the game today, some in my trade, would see this as a big step in the right direction. What they fail

to understand is that football is nothing without passion. There is more to it than virtuosity although any old timer will tell you that there is as much art in tackling as there is in a body swerve.

Some years ago I watched a match in the Uefa Cup between Tottenham and a team from the then Yugoslavia whose name now escapes me. Both played possession football to the point of boredom. The game can get like that if teams don't contest the ball at every available opportunity.

Apart from anything else tackling has provided some memorable moments in football. Bobby Moore's thunderous challenge (perhaps dubious in today's climate) on Brazil's

muscular right winger Jairzinho remains a terrific image of the 1970 World Cup finals. There was plenty to admire in Franco Baresi's forceful defending for Milan and Italy. Nobby Stiles's aggression was vital to England's success in the 1966 World Cup.

The thought that they and other notable defenders from the past would quickly incur Fifa's wrath if they were turning out today suggests that the game's popularity is at risk from muddled thinking.

Doubtless, coaches are giving a great deal of thought to the implication of Fifa's directive. They had better make learning how to cope with the loss of one, even two men an urgent priority.

High stakes in Atherton's big challenge

Partying Pakistan pair sent home

Cricket

By Derek Pringle
in Bridgetown, Barbados

AS SPORTS psychologists are fond of reminding us, happy memories play a crucial part in sporting success. Yet if the edicts of science can sometimes fall down in the minds of the sceptical, this is one theory that Michael Atherton and his team will be hoping to prove beyond doubt.

Trailing 2-1 with two Tests left to play, the captain knows that only a repeat of England's stirring victory at the Kensington Oval four years ago can keep his side in with a chance of securing one of cricket's holy grails: winning a series in the Caribbean.

For Atherton, and in particular any aspirations he may have of continuing as England captain, the match is even more crucial. The Lancashire man has had many sticky moments in his career as skipper, but none will have appeared quite as stark as the one facing him over the next few days. Win and both he and England have a good chance of surviving the series. Lose and he will almost certainly resign, perhaps renouncing his leadership of the one-day squad, too.

This tour will complete a four-year cycle for Atherton, who, although somewhat eclipsed by Alec Stewart's two brilliant hundreds here in Bridgetown, also played a major role in England's win with a fine innings of 85. On that occasion, the England captain was among the runs generally, something that has not happened so far this tour, though he is not alone in that respect and Graham Thorpe is also overdue some runs.

As he did in New Zealand last winter, it is a shortfall that Atherton has tried to sort out by spending time in the nets rather than in the middle against Barbados. It is a decision that has not escaped criticism and rightly so, though with his parents and girlfriend here at various times over the last week, that



Double digits: Alec Stewart, the scorer of two hundreds in Bridgetown in 1994, dons the wicketkeeping gloves in preparation for the crucial fifth Test. Photograph: David Ashdown

criticism has tended to be hysterical rather than objective.

And yet if the omens perhaps look promising once again for a repeat of four years ago - potentially seven of that side could also play again this time - the circumstances differ vastly. With the series at stake, England cannot afford to lose, something they had already conceded by the time Barbados had come round last time.

"There is no doubt that this is a crunch match for us," said Atherton yesterday. "It will be able to be back at the ground and we are definitely feeling positive."

Acknowledging the huge influx of England supporters that now tend to appear for the Barbados Test, Atherton said: "I'm sure the great support we got last time will be repeated." It was a sentiment later echoed by Stewart, who reckoned that the atmosphere when he and Atherton last walked out to bat here was "almost better than a home game".

What is not likely to be repeated, however, unless Stewart is given the gloves in place of Jack Russell, is the two-spinners tried in Georgetown. Instead, Andy Caddick will return, probably in place of Phil Tufnell,

whose five wickets in the last three Tests has been overhauled by Robert Croft in one match.

For the first time in the series, the pitch looks as if it has been lovingly prepared - what Stewart calls "a proper Test wicket" - with grass cuttings rolled well into a so far smooth surface. But if England's batsmen may well feel like emitting a sigh of relief, their bowlers may not be so pleased, and local pundits are already predicting a double century from Brian Lara.

Even so, the new ball will bounce steeply and whichever side dominates the opening skirmishes - either by bat or ball

- could well go on to control the course of the match. But if this suggests grudgingly contested beginnings, think again, and with the big hitting Philo Wallace and the expansive Clayton Lambert set to open the batting for the West Indies, the first few overs will be anything but dull.

Even so, with both sides' bowlers so far reliant upon generous help from the pitches, many feel that the game could well be a draw. History is against this outcome and the last draw on this ground came when Pakistan played here in 1977.

If there is a pattern that recent history upholds, it is that

the team winning the toss has a habit of putting their opponents in, mainly with dire consequences. In fact since 1986, captains winning the toss have seen fit to put the opposition in 10 times, a play that has yielded only a single success despite the help this pitch is believed to provide pace bowlers with on the first morning.

Wherever the toss falls, England and their captain badly need to win this game. Persuaded against his better judgement to continue as captain five months ago, Atherton knows he must resurrect the spirit and level of England's per-

formance here in 1994 if he is to extend his tenure.

With the series not yet decided and West Indies, particularly Curtly Ambrose and Courtney Walsh, far from complacent, it may be the greatest test of his captaincy. It is certainly the most pressing, and the next few days will see if the great survivor can add some belated glory to his longevity by winning here and taking the series into the final Test in Antigua.

England's probable XI: Atherton (capt), Stewart, M. Butler, N. Hogg, G. Thorpe, M. Atherton, R. Russell (wicket), R. Croft, A. Caddick, D. Houghton, A. Flintoff.

Another black day as Henman is beaten again

Tennis

TIM HENMAN is facing a new crisis after going out of the Champions' Cup in Indian Wells, California, in the first round on Tuesday.

The British No 2 appeared to have regained his touch after a dismal run when he reached the quarter-finals of the recent Guardian Direct Cup in Battersby. But the world

No 19 will have to go back to the drawing board after slumping 6-3, 6-4 to the Zimbabwean qualifier Wayne Black, a player ranked 60 places below him.

"I need a better game plan," Henman said. "How many times did I come to the net. Single digit number. And when did I start? 6-3, 5-2 down. I need to be able to change my tactics."

Pete Sampras celebrated his 100th consecutive week at the top of the rankings by cruising

into third round with a 6-1, 7-5 victory over Todd Martin. The defending champion, Michael Chang, withdrew from the event with a sprained left knee.

Steffi Graf, who has confirmed her entry for the Direct Line Insurance Championships at Eastbourne the week before Wimbledon, continued her comeback in style when she beat Natasha Zvereva 6-3, 6-0 to reach the semi-finals of the Evert Cup, also at Indian Wells.

Winger Evans hangs up his Test boots

Rugby Union

IEUAN EVANS, the Wales and Lions wing, has retired from international rugby after an outstanding 11-year Test career.

"There comes a time when your body and mind cries out enough is enough," Evans, who is 34 next week, said. "There comes a time when logic, not emotion, dictate your future plans and to turn my back on this game will leave a huge void."

"International rugby has had a massive influence on my life. But to fulfil both club and country training commitments

was simply too much of a burden. One had to go and it was international rugby."

Evans, who crossed the line a record 33 times in 72 appearances for Wales, has played only once for his country since March 1997 - against Italy five weeks ago - owing to a combination of injuries and Lions commitments. During his career he has suffered five shoulder dislocations, a broken leg and dislocated ankle.

"I've been putting my body under greater pressure as the years have moved on. Recovering from injury has been an increasing problem," said Evans, who last summer left

Llanelli after 14 years to join Bath. "I have already stated that I wouldn't be part of the Wales summer tour to South Africa and with only two championship matches left it would be unfair to everyone concerned to attempt to carry on."

Evans will play for Bath for another 18 months and then call it a day. "I don't think coaching is for me," he said. "Once I've put my boots away, that will be it."

Kevin Bowring, the Wales coach, said: "Ieuan will be sorely missed. I always had enormous respect for him as a player and a person. He has had an incredible international career

and, but for injury, would have had 102 caps. His absence will leave a big hole."

Gerald Davies, one of the Welsh rugby greats, said: "Ieuan would have shone in any generation of Welsh rugby. He had an athlete's pace and could play off his feet. As captain he did everything possible to sustain his country's proud reputation."

Evans, who made his international debut against France in 1987, captained Wales a record 28 times and led them to the 1994 Five Nations title. His 33 tries puts him fifth on rugby union's all-time list behind David Campese, Rory Underwood, Serge Blanco and John Kirwan.



Evans: "Enough is enough"

Awarded an MBE in 1996, Evans was three times a Lions tourist - Australia (1989), New Zealand (1993) and South Africa (1997) - making seven Test appearances for the side.

Wales relieved as kicker Jenkins receives all-clear

NEIL JENKINS has been given a clean bill of health and is set to be named today by Wales to play at stand-off against Ireland in their Five Nations' Championship match at Lansdowne Road on Saturday week.

In last Saturday's 19-13 victory over Scotland at Wembley, Jenkins was forced off after 19 minutes with a gash near his eye amid fears of more serious damage. But, after two X-rays, the Wales coach, Kevin Bowring, has been told that the goal-kicker is fit to resume immediately.

"Neil has been given the all-clear by the medical staff," the

Pontypridd rugby administrator, Eddie Jones, said.

"He is suffering from nothing more than the cut and some bruising and he has been told he can play this weekend when we face Neath in the semi-finals of the WRU Challenge Trophy."

"However, we are unlikely to play Neil as he won't be having the stitches out until the weekend but he will certainly be fit for the international."

With Jenkins declared fit, Bowring is likely to turn his attention to the pack where he does have options for change. The Swansea prop, Chris An-

thony has been in fine form for his club and Wales A and must be pushing David Young hard for the tighthead role.

Anthony has yet to start a match for Wales after four appearances as a replacement but the 21-year-old is such an outstanding prospect his chance should come sooner rather than later.

Scott Quinnell, too, could well make the starting line-up this time, the Richmond No 8 coming on as a replacement at Wembley. If Quinnell is back in favour it could be at the expense of Rob Appleby, with Colin Charvis switching from No 8 to

his customary berth at blind-side flanker.

Willie Anderson, sacked last month as the London Irish coach, has swapped one struggling team for another by returning to his former club, Dungannon.

The former Ireland captain, a cult figure at Stevenson Park for almost 20 years, has two games to steer Dungannon clear of relegation from Division One of the All-Ireland League.

Anderson has joined the coaching staff until the end of the season, but that only comprises matches against Old

Crescent and Clontarf, which Dungannon must win to have any chance of surviving in Irish rugby's top tier.

The former international centre Ian Jardine will return for Stirling County in their Tennents Premiership clash with Boroughmuir on Saturday in the hope of reclaiming his place in the Scotland A set-up.

The 32-year-old has recovered from the hamstring problem which forced him off against France A nearly three weeks ago and aims to prove his fitness before the shadow Grand Slam decider with England on Friday week.

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BULGARIA						
Pamporovo	Hard-packed cover, bare patches	100%	9.3	40	85	Foggy
CANADA						
Lake Louise	Firm packed snow	100%	11.3	90	205	Snow showers
FRANCE						
Les Deux Alpes	Good snow across upper runs	95%	11.3	25	150	Clear building
ITALY						
Cortina	Good dry cover throughout	100%	11.3	30	70	Cloudy cold
NORWAY						
Lutsi	Dry snow on hard-packed base	90%	10.3	60	60	Part cloudy
ROMANIA						
Trametes	Fresh powdery snow	50%	10.3	5	30	Snow
SPAIN						
Formigosa	New snow at all levels	91%	11.3	20	160	Unclear
SWEDEN						
Storlien	Firm packed powder snow	70%	11.3	5	25	Cloudy bright
SWITZERLAND						
St. Moritz	Snow on freshly packed snow	90%	11.3	60	100	Part cloudy
UNITED STATES						
Winter Park	Fresh powdery surface	95%	11.3	85	205	Lights snow

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مكتبة الامم المتحدة

Graf comeback in full swing as she reaches last four



Out of the shadows: Steffi Graf strikes a forehand during her 6-3, 6-0 quarter-final victory over Natasha Zvereva in the Evert Cup tournament in Indian Wells, California, yesterday

Photograph: AP

Club owners threaten court action

Rugby Union

By Chris Hewett

NO MORE posturing, no more idle threats. The final battle lines were drawn across England's bloody rugby landscape yesterday as the big-time professional clubs, the Roundheads of the domestic game's civil war, challenged the Cavalier establishment of Twickenham in the only language late-20th century sport appears to understand. Namely: "Make some concessions, or we'll see you in court".

The assault, both bold and

articulate, was led by the two most successful club owners in the country, Sir John Hall, of Newcastle and Nigel Wray, of Saracens. Together with Donald Kerr, the chairman of the English Rugby Partnership, they launched their long-awaited "charter", a vision of the future that contradicts the Club England philosophy of Fran Cotton, the vice-chairman of the Rugby Football Union, at almost every turn. If Cotton sticks to his guns – and there is no doubting his intention in that respect – the clubs will seek his head on a High Court platter.

Wray, perhaps the most thoughtful of the multi-millionaire owner-investors involved in Premiership rugby, said the fight was on for the hearts and minds of the English sporting public. "If the RFU want club rugby in this country to continue, they're going to have to change their mind about it," said the richest son of Old Millhills RFC.

"I might turn it round the other way by saying if the RFU want to exterminate the club game, they're absolutely spot-on. The clubs are facing a situation in which their regulators,

the Union, are also their direct competitors. It is crazy, a nonsense. They are asking us to build businesses on crumbling sand."

"If the RFU would only drop their fixation with divisional rugby, which has been shown to be a non-starter more times than any of us can remember, and allow the clubs to contract their players with international commitments fully protected, we might get somewhere. As it stands, though, the Cotton stance, if I can call it that, puts the clubs out of business."

"Fran simply has to remove

the club element of his plan from the table. If he doesn't, I can see us in court."

While Wray, one of the Premiership doves, was more militant than usual, his hawkish partner from Newcastle was characteristically up-front. "It's time we all came out and told people where we are going on this one," Hall said. "We've all postured ourselves to a standstill. Now it's down to business."

"We've taken Newcastle from an average crowd of 800 to something close to 5,000 – that's what we've done, not Fran Cotton or the England Test

team – and we'll take our right to exist and prosper to whatever lengths we feel necessary."

"We are going to get our rights through European legislation in two years anyway – we know that through the best legal advice – but we'd like to be able to sort it now through honest, straightforward negotiation with the ruling body. If they don't want to do it that way, fine. We'll be here in two years' time to do it the hard way."

The charter establishes a number of principles that will be anathema to the current RFU hierarchy: the clubs want

to operate as an "independent organisation" under the auspices of the Union and intend to negotiate their own broadcasting and sponsorship deals; they want to retain all leading players on club contracts; they want to set up a new European club competition managed by the participants and expand the Premiership to accommodate 14 teams; and they want to shift the Five Nations' Championship to a new end-of-season position in April and May.

"What we have at the moment is a bad marriage," said Kerr, a prominent figure at Harlequins and an old hand in the club-Union conflagration. "The Union wants total control while we want our freedom. We have enough capable businessmen on board now to make it happen."

Cotton and company beg to differ, of course. The men in wigs are already counting their prospective earnings.

Evans' Test retirement, page 30

Gascoigne move 'only a loan'

Football

By Alan Nixon

MEL STEIN, Paul Gascoigne's solicitor, revealed yesterday that the Rangers player's proposed move to Crystal Palace was a loan arrangement until the end of the season.

"If Palace go down, Paul would not be obliged to stay," Stein said. "Even if they stayed up he could leave. There would be an agreed option at a certain price, but it's no more than that at the moment."

The England midfielder had been touted as a £3m target for Palace and their prospective owner, Mark Goldberg. However, Stein revealed last night that no transfer fee would change hands until the summer and the player would only be

with Palace for the rest of the season.

"I've spoken to Mark Goldberg on the phone a couple of times, but we have not talked terms. There's no point as Paul might not fancy the club or the set-up," Stein added.

Stein's revelation raises new questions about why Rangers are letting their man go without any guaranteed payment – and whether Palace have the money to buy him.

Gascoigne is due in London next week to have a look at Palace, but he may need some convincing. Stein said: "Paul would like a bit more certainty. He asked me who is running the club and that's not particularly clear. I would anticipate there will be some other clubs coming in."

Stein met Middlesbrough's manager, Bryan Robson, yesterday and Everton could even become involved as news that Gascoigne is available on loan spreads throughout the game.

Meanwhile, Sasa Curcic's £1m move to Selhurst Park, which appeared to have stalled a few days ago when an application for a work permit was rejected, may be back on.

The Aston Villa manager, John Gregory, has revealed that he expects Palace to make a new attempt to secure a permit for the midfielder.

"I think that Palace are making one more try," Gregory said. Curcic has only started three games for Villa this season as well as losing his place in the Yugoslav national team. Both factors contributed to Palace failing in their initial attempt to secure a work permit.

Glenn Moore, page 31

Taylor frets over Fifa edict

THE chairman of the Professional Footballers' Association, Gordon Taylor, has claimed Fifa's decision to outlaw the tackle from behind had both good and bad implications.

Football's world governing body has insisted tackles from behind must be automatically punished by sending off players in the World Cup finals.

"As a forward I'd be delighted because it will encourage more attacking and skilful play," Taylor said. "There will be less injuries which will be fortunate. But it seems to be a part of the process making life a lot harder for defenders and as

such I wouldn't want to see the art of tackling go out of the game. From that point of view my judgement is tempered."

"You've got to remember this game is about attacking and defending. One of the qualities of the game is that you can think of greater tacklers and defenders who spring to mind just as easily as great goalkeepers."

"From the point of view that there'll be less injuries it'll make life a lot easier for forwards. Certainly less knocks and less worries."

"But it is a bit of a worrying process that's making life even harder for defenders these days

– with stricter refereeing, different interpretations and it's becoming difficult if not impossible for defenders to win it," he said.

"And it's going to take a lot more judgement and patience and there's going to be a period of adjustment which is going to be extremely hard for them."

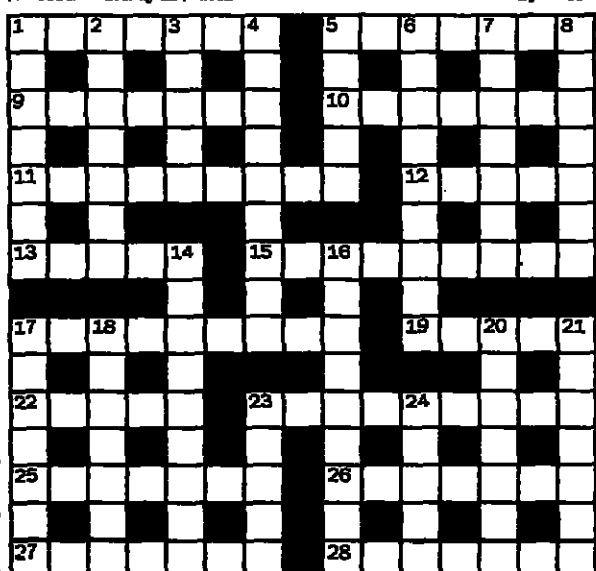
Ken Jones, page 30

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No. 3556, Thursday 12 March

By Mass

Wednesday's solution



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IMPERSONATIONS

ACROSS

- 1 Hunting dog circling like a fine specimen (7)
- 5 Normal well-worked clay-pit (7)
- 9 Block photograph? (5,2)
- 10 Drink, eating spare trifle (7)
- 11 Into Ecstasy? Crack, reportedly – and grass, I see (9)
- 12 A character of some gallantry (5)
- 13 Remove, discharge without hint of work (5)
- 15 Heighten derelict garage for housing tank (9)
- 17 First in race? That's something of a horse, in enclosed stable (9)
- 19 Appear to have good round, approaching tee... (5)

DOWN

- 1 Releases (as regards bonds) (7)
- 2 A note after instrument's missed a tempo? (3,4)
- 3 By word of mouth betrays plants (5)
- 4 Scorn a pure diet, inclined to wallow (9)
- 5 Element in The Restoration? (5)

- 6 Trade in form of protection (9)
- 7 Strike artist with a fantastic idea (7)
- 8 Transport fruit in bags (7)
- 14 Rendered drunk (9)
- 16 E.g. act badly, getting reckless, and intrude (9)
- 17 Jack in Police Department's given commendation (7)
- 18 Bird, the foraging kind, around South (7)
- 20 A European girl taking in Tolstoy's original tale (7)
- 21 Gets bored fed with commercial outbursts (7)
- 23 Fish one hauled in from bottom (5)
- 24 Best yarn editor rejected (5)

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